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MILITARY HOUSING

Lawmakers praise DOD's initial steps to address crisis but demand more

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Military officials have fixed problems in tens of thousands of privatized, on-post homes in recent weeks, top Pentagon officials told House lawmakers Thursday, vowing to establish long-term solutions to ensure military housing is safe for troops and their families.

Lawmakers applauded the initial steps the Defense Department and its four military services have taken to address widespread problems military families have reported in recent months. But they also raised concerns about those long-term fixes during a hearing of the House Armed Services' subcommittee on readiness.

"We've heard encouraging news," Rep. John Garamendi, D-Calif., who is chairman of the subcommittee, told senior civilian representatives from the defense secretary's office, the Navy, the Air Force and the Army. "However... we continue to receive large amounts of correspondence from families struggling today in privatized military family housing. We've heard that, in some cases, the very efforts headquarters put into place to try to improve the situation have led to counterproductive practices like closing maintenance work orders too quickly and increased use of private partner non-disclosure agreements to keep servicemembers and their families from speaking out about their housing concerns."

SEE CRISIS ON PAGE 7

'This is an issue we should not have dropped off.'

Robert McMahon
assistant secretary of defense
for sustainment

ANALYSIS



JORDAN CROUCH/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Sailors aboard the Avenger-class mine countermeasures ship USS Chief translate flashing-light Morse code received from the Philippine Navy vessel BRP Ramon Alcaraz during a maritime cooperative activity in the South China Sea on March 21. The Navy regularly trains with allies and partners in the Pacific, but some analysts believe that attempts to check China in the region are too little too late.

SHIP THAT HAS SAILED

Experts say US freedom-of-navigation ops won't dent Beijing's South China Sea claims

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

It's too late to constrain China's creeping militarization and sovereignty claims over dozens of islands and reefs in the South and East China seas, experts say.

China's island-building and militarization efforts began early this decade. It now claims dozens of islands and reefs in the Paracel and Spratly islands west of the Philippines. The United Nations does not recognize China's territorial claims, which overlap claims in the same area by Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Taiwan.

The U.S. regularly challenges Beijing's claims by sailing warships within 12 nautical miles of islands that China has built up in the Paracel and Spratly chains. So far this year, the Navy has picked up the pace, conducting at least five freedom-of-navigation operations, or FONOPs, since January: one each through the Paracels and Spratlys, and three through the Taiwan Strait, the latest March 24-25.

SEE OPS ON PAGE 6

MILITARY

Airman to receive Silver, Bronze stars together

By BRIAN FERGUSON
Stars and Stripes

An Air Force special tactics operator will receive the Silver Star, the nation's third highest medal, and the Bronze Star with valor for separate actions alongside Army Rangers on a recent deployment to Afghanistan, in support of the U.S. counterterrorism and advising missions there.

Tech Sgt. Cam Kelsch, a Ventura, Calif., native assigned to the 24th Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field, Fla., will receive the medals during a ceremony at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler, Ga., on Tuesday. At the ceremony, Maj. Gen. Vincent Becklund, deputy commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, will award the medals for the two missions, the command announced this week.

Deployed as a joint terminal attack controller to Afghanistan with members of the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment, Kelsch safeguarded U.S. and partner forces during an operation against a high-value target on April 25, 2018, Air Force officials said in a statement.

Kelsch, who joined the Air Force in 2008, was injured by enemy fire while dragging a wounded American teammate to safety during the fighting. Despite his wounds, he continued to guide strikes to take out all



Tech. Sgt. Cam Kelsch

remaining threats to the assault force, officials said.

"With no regard for his own personal safety, Kelsch exposed himself to danger in order to control airstrikes from an AC-130 gunship within 35 meters of his team's position," the statement said. "He also coordinated an attack with precision guided 500lb bombs from two F-16's and 105mm munitions from an AC-130."

Details of the mission — such as its location, its duration and its targets — were not disclosed. U.S. special operations troops often accompany Afghan forces into battle as part of the U.S. counterterrorism mission known as Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Master Sgt. Phillip Paquette of the 75th Ranger Regiment's 1st Battalion also received a Silver Star Medal for the April 25 operation in a ceremony last month at Hunter Army Airfield. Paquette exposed himself to enemy fire several times to retrieve a ca-

sualty and helped suppress the enemy, enabling the unit to maneuver to a helicopter landing zone for exfiltration, the Army said in a statement at the time.

A total of 14 Rangers from the battalion received valor awards at that ceremony and three were presented Purple Hearts. Army Maj. Gen. Mark Schwartz, deputy commander of Joint Special Operations Command, who presented the awards, said the battalion carried out 198 combat operations and killed or captured 1,900 terrorists during the deployment.

The Air Force did not provide further details on the mission for which Kelsch will receive the Bronze Star with valor, but Military.com reported that the special tactics airman "willingly stepped between the enemy and his ground force commander, who was injured during an ambush," citing the award citation, which also said Kelsch "eliminated the threat."

Special Tactics is the Air Force's ground special operations force that leads personnel recovery, global access, precision strike missions and battlefield surgical operations. Since 9/11, Special Tactics airmen have received one Medal of Honor, nine Air Force Crosses and 44 Silver Star Medals, making their special operations community the most combat-decorated in the Air Force since Vietnam.

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Lockheed's \$31B Marine helos 19 months behind

By TONY CAPACIO
Bloomberg

Lockheed Martin's \$31 billion King Stallion helicopter program for the U.S. Marine Corps may miss its first key milestone by more than 19 months because of a growing checklist of flaws discovered in development testing.

The Naval Air Systems Command acknowledged that the helicopter designed to carry heavy cargo won't meet its December target date for initial combat capability. The roster of unresolved technical deficiencies has grown to 106 items from about 94 logged in December, according to Navy documents.

A proposed new date — between July and September 2021 — "has not been finalized and is pending the final decision" on a request before Congress to shift \$158 million into the testing program to pay for fixes and more test flights, Greg Kuntz, a spokesman for the command, said in an email.

The latest delays for the King Stallion, which was the first major acquisition program given a go-ahead by former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, make it a prime candidate for congressional scrutiny. That questioning may begin during hearings on Navy and Marine Corps aviation before a Senate Armed Services subcommittee and its House counterpart this week.

The King Stallion, designated CH-53K, will be the same size as its predecessor, the Super Stallion, but will be able to haul almost triple the cargo, lifting 27,000 pounds, according to Lockheed. The Navy's plans to buy 200 copters for the Marines was a

prime motivation for Lockheed's \$9 billion acquisition of Sikorsky Aircraft from United Technologies in 2015.

The delay of 19 months or more is "not expected to impact" the aircraft's first planned combat deployment in 2023, Kuntz said. The list of aircraft deficiencies "will continue to fluctuate as the program continues through flight test discovery," Kuntz said.

James Geurts, the Navy's assistant secretary for acquisition, "continues to closely monitor the program," the service said in a separate statement. "He recently approved the restructure plan." "Close cooperation and risk-sharing" with Lockheed "will be critical to achieving success," according to the statement.

The Marines reduced the number of helicopters requested for fiscal 2020 to six from nine, because of "late discovery of technical issues" requiring more time and test flights, Capt. Christopher Harrison, a Marine Corps spokesman, said in an email. The issues "necessitated a decrease in near-term procurement" to "ensure uninterrupted testing," he said.

Bill Falk, the King Stallion program manager for Bethesda, Md.-based Lockheed, said in a statement that the contractor and the Navy "remain aligned on a joint program plan" to support the first deployment in 2023 to 2024.

"We have flown more than 1,300 test flight hours and completed high-altitude, hot temperature, and degraded visual environment flight tests demonstrating the CH-53K's unmatched capabilities," he said.

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EUROPE

Lithuania pact signals increased US role

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
AND JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The United States will continue to deploy troops to Lithuania and help the country develop anti-tank and missile systems, according to a comprehensive defense agreement the two countries signed this week to boost cooperation in a region set on edge by Russia's military resurgence.

The five-year "roadmap," signed by defense officials from both countries at the Pentagon on Tuesday, says the U.S. will send forces "to strengthen deterrence and to catalyze the efforts of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to develop their national defense further."

Military bilateral agreements between the U.S. and its allies are fairly routine. But the deal with Lithuania, which resembles a similar one made with Poland in September, could be an indication that the U.S. wants to step up surveillance on Russia's military exclave in neighboring Kaliningrad.

The deal "suggests that it might include more U.S. investment in scrutinizing Rus-

sian activity and weapon deployments in Kaliningrad," said Jorge Benitez, a NATO expert with the Washington-based Atlantic Council think tank.

Lithuania expects to see more joint exercises and a larger investment by the United States in the country's military infrastructure, Minister of National Defense Raimundas Karoblis said in a statement. The defense agreement signals "the U.S. disposition" to further its cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, he said.

Situated between Russian Kaliningrad and Russian ally Belarus, Lithuania is the first Baltic state to sign the roadmap, with Estonia and Latvia expected to follow suit, Pentagon officials said.

The three former Soviet bloc nations — NATO members since 2004 — have long relied on the U.S. and NATO for their security. But the alliance has stepped up its activity in the region since Russia's seizure of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014.

Two years ago, NATO leaders for the first time agreed to deploy military forces to the Baltics and eastern Poland and increase air and sea patrols.

U.S. forces since then have been on

steady rotation in Lithuania, including special operations troops.

In the latest show of force, U.S. Air Force B-52 Stratofortresses deployed to England from the U.S. flew to Lithuania and Poland last month to conduct training missions.

The roadmap, to be implemented over the next five years, is focused on expanded training missions, deterrence operations in the Baltic Sea, improving early-warning capabilities in the Baltic region, and building up cybersecurity systems to defend against attacks, according to the Defense Department.

Officials at U.S. European Command said the roadmap was a step forward.

"We are proud to deepen the ties between our two nations and improve our strategic partnership with a NATO ally," EUCOM spokeswoman Meghan Henderson said in a statement. "Together, we plan to continue to explore, bilaterally and within NATO, new ideas and opportunities, including air defense, to enhance deterrence across the region."

As part of the agreement, Lithuania's Defense Ministry will provide all necessary support for the deployment of U.S.

forces.

"U.S. foreign military programs should complement Lithuania's national funds to build anti-tank, air defense and intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance capabilities," the Pentagon statement said. "The programs also will help Lithuania gain maritime domain awareness and look to replace Soviet/Russian-made equipment and platforms." Lithuania has committed more than \$200 million in national funds to purchase U.S. military equipment.

The country is currently negotiating the procurement of 200 armored personnel carriers from U.S. manufacturer Oshkosh, Lithuania defense officials said. It's also looking to purchase anti-aircraft missiles, Javelin anti-tank systems, communications systems and ammunition.

The U.S., in turn, has spent nearly \$80 million on defense cooperation in Lithuania since 2014, defense officials said, investing in military training areas and the schooling of Lithuanian soldiers in the United States.

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US leaders say China an emerging threat for NATO

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The U.S.-led NATO pact must adapt to face an increased threat posed by China even as European allies work to counter Russia's activities, America's top diplomat said Thursday at a meeting of alliance foreign ministers.

"We must adapt our alliance to confront emerging threats," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told NATO leaders.

While NATO for the past five years has been adapting to a more aggressive Russia, "Chinese strategic competition, including technology and 5G (networks), and many other issues" also are threats for allies in Europe, Pompeo said.

Pompeo's comments came as NATO marked its 70th anniversary on Thursday in Washington, where members of the 29-nation security pact also held high-level security talks.

Since the 2014 invasion of Ukraine, NATO has focused on Russia, but the U.S. now wants the alliance to also focus on China, whose economic and military power has expanded significantly in recent years. U.S. military officials have been raising concerns about Chinese investment in ports and other infrastructure projects around Europe.

And on Wednesday, Vice President Mike Pence raised the issue on the sidelines of NATO talks, saying "adjust we must."

"Whether we like it or not the implications of China's rise will profoundly affect the choices NATO members will face, individually and collectively," Pence said.

Ultimately, China's expanding influence will demand more U.S. attention and resources, Pence said.

"As we meet that challenge, our



PAOLO MARTINEZ MONSIEVA/AP

NATO's Secretary General Jen Stoltenberg, right, talks with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo at a meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the State Department in Washington on Thursday.

European allies must do more to maintain the strength and deterrence of our trans-Atlantic alliance with their resources," he said.

Allies in Europe are under intense pressure by the U.S. to increase their military spending for the alliance's collective defense, particularly Germany — Europe's economic powerhouse often criticized for not meeting NATO defense budget targets.

"All NATO allies made a promise to invest more in defense,"

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday. "I expect all allies to deliver on what they've promised."

Meanwhile, NATO is looking at options to counter a new Russian missile system, Stoltenberg said. However, NATO has ruled out deploying ground-launched missiles in Europe as a response to Moscow's violation of a Cold War era Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, he said.

"NATO is preparing for a world without an INF treaty," Stolten-

berg said after a meeting with allied foreign ministers. "We will not mirror what Russia is doing. We will be measured and coordinated. And we have no intention of deploying ground-launched nuclear missiles in Europe."

In December, Washington announced it intended to withdraw from the treaty without compliance from Moscow, which denies any wrongdoing.

If no breakthrough is reached, the treaty will expire this summer. This has sparked concerns

'All NATO allies made a promise to invest more in defense. I expect all allies to deliver on what they've promised.'

Jens Stoltenberg
NATO secretary general

among some security analysts about the effect on the military balance in Europe and concerns of a dangerous new era of nuclear brinkmanship.

Stoltenberg said allies will "maintain credible and effective deterrence and defense." But allies also are "strongly committed to arms control and nonproliferation," he said.

Meanwhile, as expected, NATO agreed Thursday to expand its presence in the Black Sea, with a focus on intelligence gathering and stepping up training support for the Ukrainian and Georgian navies.

Both the two non-NATO members have both been involved in conflicts with Russia.

The Black Sea has emerged as a flashpoint with Russia, which seized three Ukrainian ships during a standoff with Ukraine last year.

"Right now, one of NATO's naval groups is on patrol in the Black Sea. And today, it is exercising with Ukrainian and Georgian ships," Stoltenberg said. "So we will maintain our focus and our presence in this vital region."

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PACIFIC

Soldier teaches speech to N. Korean refugee

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Yuna Jung, a North Korean refugee who escaped to the South, did a doubletake when she learned the regular occupation of her American speaking coach.

"He said he was a military officer. I said, 'Wow you're the real enemy,'" she recalled, laughing as she explained that she used to shoot at targets simulating U.S. soldiers during military training as a teenager in North Korea.

Jung, now 32, reassured Capt. Matthew McGoffin that he doesn't look at all like the targets, which were made to look ugly and sinister.

The duo worked as a team for about three months to prepare Jung for a speech contest organized by the nonprofit organization Teach North Korean Refugees.

McGoffin, who serves on the U.S. Combined Forces Command in Seoul, has volunteered for the group since reporting for duty on the divided peninsula a year ago.

The 29-year-old Lafayette, La., native is preparing to leave for his next post in Washington this month, but he hopes more soldiers and other Americans working for the military in South Korea will consider volunteering.

"Obviously, these are people who have been through a lot to get their freedom," he said during a joint interview last week. "This program is directly having an impact on real North Koreans, not hypothetical. They're not thousands of miles away. They're right here and this is what can you do about it."

Casey Lartigue, an American who co-founded the group with



Army Capt. Matthew McGoffin listens to North Korean refugee Yuna Jung during an interview in Seoul, South Korea, on March 27. McGoffin served as a speaking coach to Jung as she prepared for a speech contest.

KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

South Korean researcher Lee Eunook, said soldiers had been among the worst volunteers in the past, but the situation has improved after they began laying down the ground rules.

"We actually had one soldier that we had to ban from the program because he actually started dating one of the refugees and trying to hide it," he said, adding that happened in 2014. "We've also had some North Korean refugees who were targeting U.S. soldiers so we also had to remind them that they had to be careful to protect their privacy."

"But lately we've had really good ones, including Matt, so we've turned things around," he said.

McGoffin was drawn to the organization because he wanted to help North Korean adults, who face many challenges in trying to integrate into their new society.

More than 32,000 North Kore-

ans have fled to the South since the 1950-53 war between the two countries ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty. Defectors are automatically granted citizenship and financial support once they arrive in South Korea but must go through a transition period that includes debriefing and reeducation.

Jung, the daughter of a former North Korean military commander, decided to defect after watching South Korean dramas that painted a more flattering picture of the rival nation than she had been led to believe.

"The government taught us that South Korea is a poor country and that our forever enemy, the American military, actually colonized South Korea so the people are living in a kind of hell," she said.

She escaped to China in July 2006, then made her way through several other countries before

reaching South Korea. Jung had studied English in North Korea, but she was surprised how little she knew after arriving in Seoul.

"In North Korea they didn't teach us American English. I didn't even know that Americans speak English because they taught us that the English came from England," she said.

"When I came here I found out that my pronunciation was really, really bad. It's like an old-fashioned British accent but nobody understood," she added, speaking in clear English that showed how hard she has worked to improve her skills.

She kept a low profile during her early years in South Korea because she was afraid for her family, but her father, mother and brother have finally joined her after escaping separately so she is increasingly appearing in public.

Jung began working with Mc-

Goffin late last year because she wanted to improve her speaking skills so she can spread the word about life in North Korea.

"The reason I learned English is because when North Korea and South Korea get reunited one day finally I want to be a traveler or guide for foreigners," she said. "I want to talk about the real North Korea and be kind of like a North Korean refugee messenger."

Teach North Korean Refugees focuses on a practical approach to helping refugees by providing them with free English training.

Jung chose McGoffin as a coach for the Feb. 23 speech contest — with the theme "My future TED talk about North Korea" — because his name was on top of a list.

"I didn't know that he was a military officer, but it turned out that he was the greatest teacher," she said during the interview.

During the nearly 10-minute speech, McGoffin watched intently, reading along, as Jung described her first moments of freedom — getting South Korean citizenship, getting her driver's license and the day she got her passport.

North Korean leader "Kim Jong Un has ICBMs and missiles, but he cannot go anywhere really, but I have a little passport. I can go to America, Europe and anywhere around the world, so I felt like I have more freedom than Kim Jong Un," she said in her speech, which won second place.

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USA Softball teams with Marines in Japan to train for Olympics

By JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION Iwakuni, Japan — A sports complex shared by Marines and Japanese locals will host the USA Softball team next summer as it prepares for the Olympics in Tokyo.

The athletes will travel to the Atago Sports Complex near MCAS Iwakuni in July 2020 to train for the games, USA Softball president John Gouveia and other officials announced during a ceremony Thursday at the facility.

The games run from July 24 to Aug. 9, 2020, according to the Tokyo2020.org website. The tentative schedule shows the softball competition taking place during the first week.

This is the second time the joint-use facility has hosted USA Softball. The team spent six days at Atago in July 2018 before winning the world championship in Chiba, Japan, and clearing the way for its chance to win gold in Tokyo in 2020.

"The team will come here to get used to the time change, get

used to the climate, to learn about Iwakuni, and take part in cultural experiences that will be beneficial to our athletes," Gouveia said at the signing ceremony.

Although the schedule for the team's visit has not been laid out, there will likely be opportunities for fans to see the Olympians. Before last year's world championship, Team USA hosted a clinic with youth softball players from MCAS Iwakuni and the city, and practices were made public for air station and Iwakuni residents.

"We are looking to give back to the community and the base, but time for similar events will depend on training," said Chris Sebben, USA Softball's director of national teams.

Atago, which is 436 miles from Tokyo, sits where the dirt used to build the MCAS Iwakuni runway relocation project was acquired. The runway opened in May 2010, and the sports complex was completed in November 2017.

"The Atago Sports Complex has been a symbol of friendship between Japan and the U.S.," Iwakuni City Mayor Yoshihiko



JAMES BOLINGER/Stars and Stripes

USA Softball President John Gouveia, left, and Iwakuni City Mayor Yoshihiko Fukuda pose after signing a deal for Team USA to use Atago Sports Complex to practice for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Fukuda said in a press release on the Team USA Softball website. "I couldn't be prouder to be able to host Team USA again for Tokyo 2020. Iwakuni city continues to be committed to welcom-

ing Team USA with the spirit of 'Omotenashi' (hospitality) and to giving all the support to help the team win the Gold Medal."

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Afghan officials: Taliban kill at least 20 troops, policemen

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Under the cover of darkness, the Taliban launched a brazen attack early Thursday on an Afghan government compound in western Badghis province, killing at least 20 soldiers and policemen, officials said.

It was the latest attack by the Taliban who target Afghan forces on a daily basis even as they hold talks with a U.S. peace envoy. Fighting continued into the day and early afternoon in Badghis, and officials expressed fears the casualty tolls would be much higher.

According to Mohammad Nasir Nazari,

a provincial councilmember, the "massive attack" in Badghis took place before dawn, targeting the local government's headquarters in the district of Bala.

The Taliban first stormed all the security posts around the compound. The attack put the lives of some 600 members of the security forces deployed there at risk, he added. Jamshid Shahabhi, spokesman for the Badghis governor, said intense fighting was still underway on Thursday afternoon.

Taliban spokesman Qari Yousf Ahmadi claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement to the media.

The attack came as U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad was heading to Islamabad for talks with Pakistani officials after visiting Kabul where he lobbied for "intra-Afghan dialogue" — talks that would encompass prominent Afghan figures, government representatives and the opposition, as well as the Taliban.

Khalilzad has held several rounds of talks with the Taliban, most recently last month in Qatar where both sides said progress has been made.

But despite the talks, the Taliban still inflict staggering casualties on Afghan forces and now hold sway over half of the country.

The insurgents refuse to talk directly with the government in Kabul, considering it a U.S. puppet.

In other developments Thursday, a bombing at a clinic in the city of Puli Khumri, the capital of northern Baghlan province, killed a doctor and wounded 18 civilians, according to Javed Basharat, spokesman for the province's police chief. Two children and a woman were among the wounded. And in eastern Nangarhar province, a sticky bomb attached to a mini bus wounded five people, said police official Zaman, who like many Afghans uses only one name.

Video of British soldiers shooting at photo of Corbyn sparks probe

By JENNIFER HASSAN
The Washington Post

LONDON — A video showing British soldiers firing shots at a poster of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn circulated on social media Wednesday sparking widespread concern and an investigation by the Ministry of Defense.

Taking to Twitter, Sky News' defense and security correspondent, Alistair Bunkall, shared the video, writing that the Ministry of Defense had confirmed it as legitimate.

The British soldiers are be-

lieved to have been stationed in Afghanistan and at a shooting range in Kabul when the video was recorded and shared on Snapchat, before it was published to Twitter. Bunkall's tweet of the footage has been viewed almost 900,000 times as of midday Wednesday in Britain.

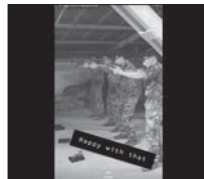
The video, which opens with soldiers firing in succession, ends with a close up of a bullet ridden photo of Corbyn's face.

"We are aware of a video circulating on social media, this behavior is totally unacceptable and falls well below the high stan-

dards the army expects, a full investigation has been launched," the Army said in a statement.

For its part, Corbyn's Labour Party described the incident as "alarming and unacceptable" and expressed full confidence in the Ministry of Defense to investigate it.

The video comes at a particularly tense time in Britain, as politicians continue to squabble and vote down Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit plans. This week, May and Corbyn will meet to negotiate how exactly Britain will leave the European Union.



AP

In these images from video, British soldiers, right, are seen aiming at a photo of Britain's Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, left, at a British army base in Kabul, Afghanistan.



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PACIFIC

Ops: Experts say it's too late to counter China's claims in region

FROM FRONT PAGE

That's half as many operations in three months as the Navy reported conducting in all of 2018. The Navy does not publicize all of those operations, however.

"Our goal is to make sure [China's] development of militarized outposts] doesn't become a tool to operationalize an expansive illegal sovereignty claim," Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Randall Schriver told the House Armed Services Committee on March 27.

Nonetheless, sailing through those seas — or flying above them as the Air Force did with B-52 bombers at least three times in March — is probably too little, too late, said security analyst Paul Buchanan, an American, of 36th Parallel Assessments, a private, nonpartisan, strategic analysis consulting firm based in New Zealand.

"The horse has bolted," he said during a January interview with Stars and Stripes. "The days of confronting the Chinese are long gone. It should have been done 10 years ago. Island-building has enabled [China] to claim possession of the South China Sea."

On that point, Masayuki Tadokoro, a professor of international relations at Keio University, agreed.

"It is too late to attempt to control China," Tadokoro said during a panel discussion March 7 sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"It is almost impossible because of the economic importance of China and also China's geopolitical presence" in the South China Sea, Tadokoro said.

Free trade

Conceding the South China Sea to China would imperil free trade in an economically important region, Buchanan said. About \$3.37 trillion worth of goods — 21% of all global trade — passes through the area in 2016, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies' China Power project.

In that area alone, China has claimed 27 reefs and islands, building outposts for military and civilian personnel on 12 of them since 2014, according to the center's Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative. Many of what were once bare reefs and uninhabited islands are now military bases, some with missiles, warship docks and landing strips.

Buchanan said Beijing could continue to allow free transit of the South China Sea to benefit trade but, so far, has treated the sea as its own.

"With that embedded in your maritime perspective, it's pretty hard to be the guarantor of freedom of navigation," Buchanan said. "Their intentions are not for the betterment of the global community — their intentions are for the benefit of themselves."

"If we replace the U.S. security guarantee for the Chinese security guarantee ... [the South China Sea] will be a security checkpoint rather than an open



BENJAMIN F. DAVELLA III/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

An F-35B Lightning II aircraft assigned to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121 takes off last month from the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp while in the South China Sea.

passage," he said.

A January report by the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, "China Military Power," said China aims to strengthen its control over disputed areas, enhance its presence and challenge other claimants.

"China's maritime emphasis and concern with protecting its overseas interests have increasingly drawn the [People's Liberation Army] beyond China's borders and immediate periphery," the report said.

Freedom of navigation

To challenge those moves, the U.S. Navy in 2017 conducted at least six freedom-of-navigation operations, including two in the Paracel Islands, one in the Spratly Islands and the remainder described generally as in the South and East China seas, according to a Defense Department report that year.

The U.S. routinely explains that its freedom-of-navigation operations are intended to "challenge excessive maritime claims," though Navy public affairs statements are intended to "challenge passage of foreign military ships" through those areas.

However, the 2017 Defense Department report stated that China claims areas around the islands and reefs to which they are "not so entitled" and expects "prior permission" for "innocent passage of foreign military ships" through those areas.

Expecting China to abandon its claims is unrealistic, retired Chinese Navy Capt. Liu Xiaobo said in a March 1 analysis for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a bipartisan, nonprofit think tank in Washington.

"It is not realistic for China to ask the United States to abandon

its FONOPs, and it is just as unrealistic for the United States to ask China to simply drop its excessive maritime claims," Liu wrote. "... there is space for consultation between China and the United States here."

While freedom-of-navigation operations have been part of U.S. defense strategy around the world for decades, Buchanan said it needs to do more.

Getting tough

That means a tougher approach — even if it brings a hostile response, Buchanan said in an interview March 22. For example, the Navy could increase the frequency of its freedom-of-navigation patrols and send warships deeper into the 12-nautical-mile radius around the islands and reefs that China claims, he said.

The Navy is "not getting really close to the territorial limits that the Chinese claim. If you wanted to press the point, you could drive way into those territorial waters and see what happens," Buchanan said. "I wouldn't doubt that the Chinese would fire upon any warship that went in there."

In September, a Chinese destroyer, the Luoyang, came within 45 yards of the USS Decatur near Gaven Reef, a Chinese-occupied territory in the Spratly Islands. The Navy called the maneuver unprofessional.

The 7th Fleet commander, Vice Adm. Phillip Sawyer, on March 18 in Manila, Philippines, said the incident does not change Navy plans for freedom-of-navigation operations, according to The Associated Press.

Buchanan said he doesn't think the American public "has the stomach" for an armed conflict with China, but it will soon have

to choose whether to fight or concede the Chinese claims.

China is building its military power with the addition of the Dong-Feng 21 and 26, so-called "carrier-killer" missiles. Beijing claims these missiles can strike a moving target on the ocean, a move that may counter the U.S. advantage in power-projecting aircraft carriers.

"The cost to any U.S. government of losing this hallowed symbol of U.S. military supremacy to an upstart power will be consequential," Buchanan said. "The Chinese know this; they just need to pick the time to pick the fight."

"While the U.S. can still outgun [China] and have superiority over them, it's incumbent upon the United States to make the move."

Diplomacy

The U.S. last year disavowed China from its Rim of the Pacific exercise in Hawaii, pointing to Beijing's excessive claims. Similar actions could be expected, Schriver told the House Armed Services Committee on March 27.

"[China's] activities in the South China Sea could be met with consequences elsewhere, as I think was the case with RIMPAC," he said. "We are intent on making sure no one country can change international law per the norms."

Liu said in his analysis that China should come to the bargaining table with the U.S. regarding some of its claims.

"Resolving divergent opinions over freedom of navigation through careful negotiation and amending domestic laws and policies on innocent passage or military use of the [exclusive economic zone], while seeming

on their face to be concessions, would indeed be a path of major progress toward oceanic power for China," he said.

In Washington, signs that more diplomatic approaches to address the issue are on the horizon. On Dec. 31, President Donald Trump signed into law the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act, which authorized \$1.5 billion for military and diplomatic programs in the Asia-Pacific region.

In the law, Congress tasked the president with developing "a diplomatic strategy that includes working with United States allies and partners to conduct joint maritime training and freedom-of-navigation operations in the Indo-Pacific region, including the East China Sea and the South China Sea."

The Navy regularly trains with allies and partners in the Pacific, working with countries such as Japan, the Philippines and Australia throughout the year. France and the United Kingdom have committed to sending aircraft carriers to the region, with the Charles de Gaulle setting sail last month. The Royal Navy's HMS Queen Elizabeth will start its patrol in 2021.

The act also reiterated the U.S. strategic commitment to the freedom of navigation in the Pacific and the continuation of military freedom-of-navigation operations.

"It is the policy of the United States to conduct, as part of its global Freedom of Navigation Program, regular freedom of navigation and overflight operations in the Indo-Pacific region, in accordance with applicable international law," the act states.

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MILITARY

Navy conducts housing survey after uproar

By ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

Sailors in privatized residences may have a chance to voice their opinion about their living conditions in response to recent complaints by military families about housing health and safety concerns, Navy officials announced Tuesday.

Adm. John Richardson, chief of naval operations, directed the survey, which is different than the standard annual questionnaire given to residents, according to a news release from Navy Installations Command, the headquarters for service bases worldwide.

The survey aims to address concerns raised through the media and congressional hearings dur-

ing the past few months about the living conditions in privatized military housing. A 2018 investigation by Reuters ignited the examination into military housing.

The Military Family Advisory Network, which advocates for servicemembers and their families, responded to the reporting by conducting its own survey. About 56 percent of the nearly 17,000 respondents said they had a negative view of their living conditions.

Stories of termites, black mold, roach infestations, lead paint and slow response time for maintenance requests have led Congress and the Defense Department to begin drafting a tenant bill of rights for military families.

Aside from the survey, the Navy has conducted town hall

meetings at all its installations worldwide and walk-throughs where residents volunteer to have their chain of command visit their home. The Navy said it is also working with private property management companies to ensure maintenance and repairs are being conducted and other issues are addressed with their landlord, according to the news release.

Each military branch has responded in various ways to complaints about housing conditions. Similar to the Navy, the Army, Air Force and Marines have conducted town hall meetings with residents and reached out for feedback through various forms of communication, including door-to-door walk-throughs in some neighborhoods.

Through the Navy survey, sailors will be able to note their likes and dislikes with privatized housing, concerns about their homes, community and services provided by privatized housing management companies, as well as overall satisfaction, according to the Navy news release. Participation is strongly encouraged, though not mandated. It takes about 10 minutes to complete.

The Navy is paying CEL & Associates Inc., an independent third party, to conduct the survey, which will go to about 36,200 residents of family housing and 6,000 sailors in unaccompanied housing. Respondents have the option to remain anonymous.

Residents will receive a letter or email with information on how

to access the online survey during April. It has similar questions but is separate from the annual survey conducted by privatized housing companies, which is also being conducted at this time.

In a March hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Navy Secretary Richard Spencer said military leaders are revisiting agreements with private housing companies.

"It is clear in many cases, we have fallen woefully short of this obligation, and upon reviewing the issues surrounding housing, it is apparent there is culpability around the table," he said.

Stars and Stripes reporter Claudia Grisales contributed to this report. thayer.rose@stripes.com
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Crisis: Pentagon planning to implement resident bill of rights

FROM FRONT PAGE

The main problem, he said, was a lack of commanders paying attention to the issue.

The Pentagon officials agreed. Before the military moved to privatize most of its on-base housing in the mid-1990s, it educated military leaders on ways to help their servicemembers deal with housing problems, but that training was eventually scrapped, said Robert McMahon, the assistant secretary of defense for sustainment.

"This is an issue we should not be dropped off," he said, admitting concerns raised by servicemembers about housing problems in recent years often were ignored by their higher-ups.

Since damning reports emerged in recent months of widespread housing failures including mold, lead paint, pest infestations, shoddy workmanship and unresponsive management, the Pentagon has made fixing the underlying causes of the problems one of its top priorities, McMahon said.

The military services are conducting surveys or directly reaching out to families living in the some 200,000 privatized military dwellings across the world, the senior defense officials said.

Top leadership has met extensively with executives of the private companies running the housing and demanded better service, they said. In some cases, those companies have already taken steps, including adding new employees and better training, to address the problems.

Additionally, the services have instructed their inspectors general to probe the issue and have

taken other steps, such as requesting money to increase the sizes of their housing management staffs on installations, which were reduced in recent years due to budget cuts, the officials said.

The other senior defense officials testifying alongside McMahon were John W. Henderson, the assistant secretary of the Air Force for installations, environment and energy; Thomas Modly, the undersecretary of the Navy; and Alex Beehler, the assistant secretary of the Army for installations, environment and energy.

To solve the long-term problem, McMahon said the Pentagon is implementing a resident bill of rights, determining if it can develop standardized resident leases and improving processes for residents to report health issues and establishing resident customer care advocates.

But McMahon did not provide detailed estimates of how long such programs would take to implement when pressed by lawmakers or how the services would measure the success of those policies.

"I think we can all agree we are in a bad place," said Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, D-Pa. "I think what we need to agree on is how we move forward... how we quantify [success], how we measure it, how we move forward with discreet programs that will address" problems.

Rep. Doug Lamborn, R-Colo., said the military seemed to be taking "good first steps."

"But it's only the first steps," he said. "Time will prove and tell that this is being successfully rectified."

He and Garamendi vowed future hearings on the same issue.

"We will be following up," Garamendi said. "Heads up, folks. We will be coming back to this issue before this year is over."

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NATION

Sources: Handling of Mueller report riles investigators

By ELLEN NAKASHIMA,
CAROL D. LEONNIG
AND ROSALIND S. HELDERMAN
The Washington Post

Members of special counsel Robert Mueller III's team have told associates they are frustrated with the limited information Attorney General William Barr has provided about their nearly two-year investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election and whether President Donald Trump sought to obstruct justice, according to people familiar with the matter.

The displeasure among some who worked on the closely held inquiry has quietly begun to surface in the days since Barr released a four-page letter to Congress on March 24 describing what he said were the principal conclusions of Mueller's still-confidential, 400-page report.

In his letter, Barr said that the special counsel did not establish a conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russia. And he said that Mueller did not reach a conclusion "one way or the other" as to whether Trump's conduct constituted obstruction of justice.

Absent that, Barr told lawmakers that he concluded the evidence was not sufficient to prove that the president obstructed justice.

But members of Mueller's team have complained to close associates that the evidence they gathered on obstruction was alarming and significant.

"It was much more acute than Barr suggested," said one person who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the subject's sensitivity.

The New York Times first reported that some special counsel investigators feel that Barr did not adequately portray their findings. Some members of the office were particularly disappointed that Barr did not release summary information the special counsel team had prepared, according to two people familiar with their reactions.

"There was immediate displeasure from the team when they saw how the attorney general had characterized their work instead," according to one U.S. official briefed on the matter.

Summaries were prepared for different sections of the report, with a view that they could be made public, the official said.

The report was prepared "so that the front matter from each section could have been released immediately — or very quickly," the official said. "It was done in a way that minimum redactions, if any, would have been necessary,



CURT OWEN/AP

Special counsel Robert Mueller departs St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington on March 24. Some members of his investigative team are reportedly voicing concerns over Attorney General William Barr's handling of information from their two-year investigation.

and the work would have spoken for itself."

Mueller's team assumed the information was going to be made available to the public, the official said, "and so they prepared their summaries to be shared in their own words — and not in the attorney general's summary of their work, as turned out to be the case."

During nearly two years of work, Mueller's team — which included 19 lawyers and roughly 40 FBI agents, analysts and other professional staff — worked in near silence, speaking only rarely through public documents filed in court.

Some members of Mueller's team appear caught off guard by how effectively the president has used Barr's letter to claim total victory, as the limited information about their work has been weaponized in the country's highly polarized political environment,

according to people familiar with their responses.

Their frustrations come as polls show many Americans have already drawn conclusions about the special counsel findings — even though only a handful of words from the report have so far been released.

On Wednesday night, Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, questioned why Barr did not release the special counsel's summary material.

"It's been my assumption that a 400-page report has an executive summary already, and, of course, it begged the question, 'Why did Barr feel the need to release his own summary?'" he said on MSNBC. "Why didn't he release a summary produced by Bob Mueller itself instead of trying to shape it through his own words?"

It is not yet clear if Mueller's

full investigative findings will be released publicly.

Barr told Congress in a letter last week that the principal conclusions he described were not meant to be a summary of Mueller's investigation.

He said he is aiming to submit a redacted version of the report to Congress by mid-April after removing classified and grand jury material, as well as damaging information about peripheral players who were not charged with crimes.

"Everyone will soon be able to read it on their own," Barr wrote.

Barr said the special counsel's report is divided into two parts. The first pertains to the Russian effort to influence the 2016 election and documents crimes committed by Russians in that regard. The second addresses a number of actions by the president as potentially raising concerns about obstruction of justice, Barr said.

House votes to end support for Yemen war in slap at Trump

By SUSANNAH GEORGE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House on Thursday voted to end American involvement in the Yemen war, rebuffing the Trump administration's support for the military campaign led by Saudi Arabia.

The bill now heads to President Donald Trump, who is expected to veto it. The White House says the bill raises "serious constitutional concerns."

Congress lacks the votes to override him.

By a 247-175 vote, Congress for the first

time invoked the decades-old War Powers Resolution to try and stop a foreign conflict.

"The president will have to face the reality that Congress is no longer going to ignore its constitutional obligations when it comes to foreign policy," said Democratic Rep. Eliot Engel, of New York, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He said the humanitarian crisis in Yemen triggered by the war "demands moral leadership."

The war is in its fifth year. Thousands of people have been killed and millions are on the brink of starvation. The United Na-

tions has called the situation in Yemen the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

The top Republican on the committee, Rep. Michael McCaul of Texas, acknowledged the dire situation in Yemen for civilians but spoke out in opposition to the bill, saying it was an abuse of the War Powers Resolution.

"This radical interpretation has implications far beyond Saudi Arabia," McCaul said.

He warned that the measure could "disrupt U.S. security cooperation agreements with more than 100 countries."

Opposition to the Saudi-led war in Yemen

gathered support last year in the aftermath of the killing of U.S.-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The Washington Post columnist was killed in October by agents of the kingdom, a close U.S. partner, while he was in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

U.S. intelligence agencies and lawmakers believe that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman ordered the murder of Khashoggi, who had written articles critical of the kingdom.

Lawmakers from both parties have scrutinized U.S.-Saudi ties and criticized Trump for not condemning Saudi Arabia strongly enough.

Applications for US unemployment aid at lowest level in 49 years

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of people seeking U.S. unemployment benefits fell to its lowest level since late 1969, a sign that employers are holding onto their workers despite signs of a slowing economy.

Weekly applications for jobless aid fell 10,000 to a seasonally adjusted 202,000, the Labor Depart-

ment said Thursday. That is the lowest since the week of December 6, 1969.

Applications are a proxy for layoffs, so the drop to such a low number indicates that companies are cutting very few workers. That's a reassuring sign as other data, such as weak consumer and business spending and sluggish growth overseas, point to slower U.S. growth this year.

A report Wednesday from payroll processor ADP found that businesses added just 129,000 jobs in March, down from 197,000 the previous month.

Still, economists expect that the government's March jobs report, to be released Friday, will show a solid rebound from the paltry 20,000 jobs gained in February.

"We see the initial claims data as consistent with healthy labor

market conditions and in line with the widely anticipated rebound in the pace of payroll employment in March," Jonathan Miller, an economist at Barclays, said in a note to clients.

Analysts forecast that a solid 170,000 jobs were added, enough to lower the unemployment rate over time, according to data provider FactSet. The unemployment rate likely remained near a

five-decade low of 3.8%, analysts project.

Growth has slowed since it topped 4% at an annual rate in the April-June quarter of last year, decelerating to just 2.2% in the final three months of 2018.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta projects the U.S. economy expanded at a 2.1% pace in the first three months of this year.

NATION

Arrest revives concerns over Mar-a-Lago security

Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. — As palm trees swayed in the ocean breeze, Yujing Zhang approached Secret Service agents in the Mar-a-Lago parking lot.

She said she was going to the swimming pool at the Palm Beach presidential estate and presented agents with two Chinese passports in her name.

That raised suspicions with her screeners, but a call to the front desk at Mar-a-Lago revealed a club member with a similar last name and with that, and a possible language barrier, reception waved her through.

Not long after, Zhang was arrested carrying four cellphones, a laptop computer, an external hard drive and a thumb drive containing computer malware in an incident that is shining a spotlight on the unique difficulty of fortifying the oceanside Florida estate of President Donald Trump — who was staying at the club that weekend but golfing elsewhere at the time.

Zhang's arrest has revived concerns about security — particularly cybersecurity — at a presidential refuge that mixes social functions, world diplomacy and extraordinary access to the president. Hundreds of members frequent Mar-a-Lago and the president's other private clubs, which function as working resorts even when Trump visits, creating a series of challenges that test the Secret Service.

Federal officials were looking into whether Zhang was part of a larger effort to gain access to the president and do potential harm, and were combing through her devices and treating the case as a "credible threat," according to a U.S. official who was not authorized to speak about the ongoing probe and discussed the matter on condition of anonymity.

Democratic lawmakers were inquiring about a possible connection to Li Yang, the Republican



ALEX BRANDON/AP

President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort is seen in Palm Beach, Fla., in November 2017.

donor and spa owner who promised Chinese business leaders that her consulting firm could get them access to the president at Mar-a-Lago.

Democrats on Wednesday called for an investigation into security at Mar-a-Lago and whether classified information stored there is at risk from hostile foreign governments. House Oversight Committee Chairman Elijah Cummings, D-Md., said he would get a briefing Thursday from the Secret Service.

"We want to make sure that the Secret Service is being the very best that they can be, and we want to find out more about exactly what kind of security they had down there in Florida," Cummings said. "I think it's very, very, very important that the president be protected. And I feel very strongly about that."

Trump on Wednesday dismissed the incident, saying it was "just a fluke situation."

"We have very good control," he told reporters.

Senators introduce bill on crisis in Venezuela

By LUIS ALONSO LUGO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A bipartisan group of 14 U.S. senators introduced a bill Wednesday that they say will help restore democracy and address the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela.

Sen. Bob Menendez, a Democrat from New Jersey, said the proposed legislation is "much more expansive" than the three bills on Venezuela adopted last week by the House of Representatives with bipartisan support.

The House bills would add new restrictions on the export of tear gas, riot gear and other items to Venezuela that could be used for crime control; urge the Trump administration to provide up to \$150 million in humanitarian aid; and require the State Department and intelligence agencies to provide an assessment of the threat from Russian influence in the South American country.

The Senate bill would accelerate planning at international financial institutions for Venezuela's reconstruction, authorize \$400 million in new humanitarian assistance and formally recognize and support efforts by Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido to restore democracy.

It also would remove sanctions on designated Venezuelans not involved in human rights abuse if they recognize Guaido as the country's interim president, something the U.S. and about 50 other governments have done.

They contend Nicolas Maduro's reelection as president last year was not legitimate.

The U.S. has revoked dozens of visas and imposed multiple rounds of sanctions as part of a campaign to force Maduro to turn over power to Guaido.

The Senate proposal does not include the "all options are on the table" language used by the White House when referring to its Venezuela policy, even though U.S. officials have said Washington is not pursuing a military option at this time.

Menendez told reporters in a conference call that he is optimistic about the prospects for the bill in the Senate, citing backing from Sen. James Risch, an Idaho Republican who is chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. He said Risch voiced support for the measure as long as Menendez and Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida remain among its sponsors.

The 14 senators introduced their bill one day after more than 40 organizations sent letters to members of Congress urging support for dialogue to resolve the crisis in Venezuela and opposing the sanctions imposed by the Trump administration.

"We call on you to take a strong, public stand against these immoral, reckless, and illegal policies and to support efforts to advance peaceful dialogue, before it is too late," the letter said.

Inaugural planner sought for interview with House

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The House Intelligence Committee wants to interview — and has requested records from — a key planner of President Donald Trump's inauguration, a person familiar with the matter said Wednesday, adding to a growing list of inquiries into the funding of the celebrations.

The request was revealed in a letter Trump's inaugural committee received this week from an attorney for the planner, Stephanie Winston Wolkoff, a former adviser to first lady Melania Trump who played a leading role organizing the inaugural parties.

The House Intelligence Committee's request was first reported Wednesday by The Wall Street Journal.

The letter said that the House committee on March 19 requested Wolkoff provide unspecified records and also submit to a voluntary interview. It also showed that Wolkoff was subpoenaed to testify in early October before a federal grand jury in Manhattan, where federal prosecutors are investigating, among other things, whether foreigners illegally contributed to the inaugural events.

The House committee's request was described by The Associated Press by a person familiar with the matter who wasn't authorized to discuss it and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

A spokesman for the House Intelligence Committee, Patrick Boland, declined to comment.

Calls to Wolkoff's residence seeking comment Wednesday went unanswered.

The person familiar with the matter said a sealed court order had prohibited Wolkoff from disclosing the federal subpoena she received for 180 days.

The inaugural committee raised an unprecedented \$107 million to host events celebrating Trump's inauguration in January 2017 but has drawn mounting scrutiny in recent months.

The latest request came about two weeks after the House Judiciary Committee, as part of a broad probe into Trump's activities, asked the inaugural committee for a wide range of financial records.

The inaugural committee also has received subpoenas from the attorneys general of New Jersey and Washington, as well as from federal prosecutors in New York.

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NATION

House Democrats seek Trump's tax returns from IRS

By MARCY GORDON
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A House committee chairman formally asked the IRS to provide six years of President Donald Trump's personal tax returns and the returns for some of his businesses as Democrats try to shed light on his complex financial dealings and potential conflicts of interest.

The request by Massachusetts

Rep. Richard Neal, who heads the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee, is the first such demand for a sitting president's tax information in 45 years. The unprecedented move is likely to set off a huge legal battle between Democrats controlling the House and the Trump administration.

Neal made the request Wednesday in a letter to IRS Commissioner Charles Rettig, asking for Trump's personal and business returns for 2013 through 2018. He asked for the documents in seven days, setting an April 10 deadline.

Trump told reporters Wednesday he "would not be inclined" to provide his tax returns to the committee.

An IRS spokesman said the agency had no immediate comment on Neal's request.

Democrats insist that obtaining Trump's tax filings falls within their mandate of congressional oversight. Republicans have denounced it as a political witch hunt and invoked privacy concerns.

"We have completed the necessary groundwork for a request

of this magnitude, and I am certain we are within our legitimate legislative, legal and oversight rights," Neal said in a statement Wednesday evening.

Rep. Kevin Brady, of Texas, the senior Republican on the Ways and Means panel, denounced the move as "an abuse of the tax-writing committees' statutory authority."

"Weaponizing our nation's tax code by targeting political foes sets a dangerous precedent and weakens Americans' privacy rights," Brady wrote in a letter Wednesday to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who oversees the IRS. "As you know, by law all Americans have a fundamental right to the privacy of the personal information found in their tax returns."

The legal battle set to ensue could take years to resolve, possibly stretching beyond the 2020 presidential election.

Trump broke with decades of tradition for presidential candidates by refusing to release his income tax filings during his 2016 campaign. He has said he won't release them because he is being audited, even though IRS officials have said taxpayers under audit are free to release their returns. Trump claimed at a news conference following the November election that the filings are too complex for people to understand.

The IRS has a policy of auditing the tax returns of all sitting presidents and vice presidents, "yet little is known about the effectiveness of this program," Neal said in the statement. "On behalf of the American people, the Ways and Means Committee must determine if that policy is being followed, and if so, whether these audits are conducted fully and appropriately."

but they have key commonalities that now inject special tension into their rivalry as they ramp up their campaigns.

Both lead the pack in fundraising and have built substantial campaign treasuries on thousands of small donors nationwide rather than using the more traditional model of a small core of major financial backers.

They also strike chords with the same part of the electorate. In their last races, each rose on a strong appeal to young



Former Vice President Joe Biden, right, embraces University of Delaware President Dennis Assanis during an event at the University of Delaware in Newark, Del., in 2017. Biden's displays of personal affection have drawn complaints from several women who said they were made to feel uncomfortable. AP

Biden: I'll be more mindful of respecting personal space

By THOMAS BEAUMONT
Associated Press

Former Vice President Joe Biden acknowledged Wednesday that his tendency toward physical displays of affection and encouragement has made some women uncomfortable, and he promised to be "much more mindful" of respecting personal space.

"Social norms have begun to change. They've shifted," Biden, 76, said in a cellphone video posted to Twitter. "And the boundaries of protecting personal space have been reset. And I get it. I get it. I hear what they are saying. I understand."

Wearing a suit and open-collared shirt, Biden also teased an announcement of his political plans, promising to "be talking to you about a whole lot of issues." Shortly after the video was released, a union announced Biden would speak at their conference in Washington on Friday.

The video was Biden's first direct comment on what has tripped up his preparations to enter the 2020 Democratic presidential campaign. He did not directly apologize but seemed to be seeking to ease some people's discomfort, which has raised questions about whether he could wage an effective campaign.

On Friday, former Nevada politician Lucy Flores wrote in *New York Magazine* that Biden approached

her from behind, touched her shoulders and kissed the back of her head in 2014.

Since then, another woman has said Biden grabbed her face when he was thanking congressional staff at a 2009 event.

On Wednesday, The Washington Post reported that three additional women had recounted uncomfortable encounters with Biden. One of them, Vail Kohnert-Yount, said she was a White House intern in the spring of 2013 when she met Biden in the West Wing and, as they chatted, he put his hand on the back of her head and pressed his forehead to hers and called her a "pretty girl."

Biden, a former longtime U.S. senator from Delaware, first said in a statement that he did not recall the episode that Flores initially described in the magazine piece and then in subsequent weekend interviews.

In the video Wednesday, Biden insisted that what he described as the compassion from where the affection comes will not change and again nodded to the steps he's taking toward running.

"But I'll always believe governing — life, for that matter — is about connecting, connecting with people," he said. "That won't change."

Biden also said that he would be more careful about his actions in the future.

O'Rourke, Sanders vie for same young voters in campaign

By WILL WEISSERT
Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — In the growing Democratic presidential field, they seem like a study in opposites.

One's 77, a democratic socialist from the U.S.-Canada border state of Vermont who exudes a curmudgeonly grumpiness and bursts with detailed policy proposals. The other's a boyish 46-year-old native of the U.S.-Mexico border city of El Paso, Texas, who livestreams his skateboarding prowess and offers hopeful but vague paeans to tolerance and cooperation.

Bernie Sanders and Beto O'Rourke may represent different poles among the dozens of Democrats vying for the White House,



O'Rourke



Sanders

voters.

Now, though, it's not clear both can exploit their strengths while going head-to-head.

Already, they find themselves recruiting some of the same campaign talent, with a few veterans of Sanders' 2016 presidential bid having signed on this time

with O'Rourke.

While other candidates in the 2020 race have natural connections to other parts of the Democratic voting base, Sanders, a U.S. senator, and O'Rourke, a former con-

gressman, could find themselves in more of a zero-sum contest for the same turf. Both will be in Iowa this weekend campaigning for the upper hand.

"If Bernie begins to surge, the Beto people will largely go there. The opposite's true, too," said Jim Hightower, a former Texas agriculture commissioner who was a top state Sanders supporter in 2016 but also among the first to counsel O'Rourke on his near-upset in November of Sen. Ted Cruz.

This week, Sanders announced that he raised \$18.2 million in 41 days of campaigning through March 31. O'Rourke countered that he'd collected \$9.4 million in an 18-day period, or \$520,000-plus daily.

NATION

US condemns 'broken' Alabama prison system

Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Alabama has the nation's deadliest prisons, where violence is "too common, cruel, of an unusual nature, and pervasive" the Department of Justice found Wednesday in a scathing report that said male inmates are housed in unconstitutional conditions.

During a single week in Alabama's prison system, one inmate bled to death after being stabbed repeatedly as two others stood guard at a dormitory's doors. Another stabbed inmate had to be evacuated by helicopter. A prisoner in a dorm reserved for those with good behavior was attacked with a sock filled with metal locks.

The Justice Department said inmates endure an "extraordinarily high rate of violence at the hands of other prisoners," with the number of inmate-on-inmate attacks spiking dramatically in the last 5½ years. The department gave Alabama 49 days to begin to correct the violations or possibly face a federal lawsuit.

"Our investigation found reasonable cause to believe that Alabama fails to provide constitutionally adequate conditions and that prisoners experience serious harm, including deadly harm, as a result," Assistant Attorney General Eric Dreihand, head of the department's civil rights divi-

sion, said in a statement. The letter included dozens of recommendations, including the immediate hiring of 500 new corrections officers and eventually up to 1,500 more.

The report lays out in unsparring detail a culture of violence across the state's 13 prisons for men, which house roughly 16,000 inmates in dangerously understaffed prisons that are also among the nation's most overcrowded. It chronicles inmate rapes, beatings and fatal stabbings at the hands of fellow prisoners and decries a management system that undercounts homicides and fails to protect prisoners even when warned of a problem.

In February 2018, one prisoner was killed the day after telling prison officials he'd been threatened in a dispute over a cellphone. In another prison that same month, an inmate who'd been repeatedly disciplined for knife possession fatally stabbed another prisoner in a fight.

Rapes happen day and night in all corners of the prisons — dormitories, cells, showers and recreation areas — and are "too often undetected or prevented" by prison staff, according to the report. Investigators reviewed more than 600 reported inmate-on-inmate sexual assaults from late 2016 through April 2018, the report said, and "did not identify a single incident in which a correctional officer or other



BRYNN ANDERSON/AP

Prisoners stand in a lunch line in 2015 at Elmore Correctional Facility in Alabama. The Justice Department says Alabama's prisons violate the Constitution by failing to protect inmates from violence and housing them in overcrowded facilities.

staff member observed or intervened."

The prison system documented 24 prisoner homicides between January 2015 and June 2018, but the Justice Department said that number was an undercount.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey said in a statement that the federal investigation identified some of the issues the state has been trying to address, including the need to hire additional officers.

The Southern Poverty Law Center shared with The Associated Press photos from someone inside an Alabama prison that showed inmates stabbed and bloody or dead in their cells. In one photo, a knife sticks out of a man's back.

The Justice Department report said the assaults and a homicide during a single week in September 2017 are "a window into a broken system that too often disre-

gards prisoners' safety."

In one incident that week in a unit nicknamed the "Hot Bay" for housing inmates with disciplinary infractions, an inmate bled to death after being stabbed while two prisoners stood guard at the dormitory door. The inmate screamed for help as prisoners banged on the door to try to get the attention of officers.

The findings are the latest blow to the state's troubled prison system. The Justice Department in 2015 ordered changes at the state's only prison for women.

A federal judge in 2017 ruled the state has provided "horrendously inadequate" care to mentally ill inmates and ordered changes. The same judge this week is weighing whether to order the state to take immediate action after 15 inmate suicides in 15 months.

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NATION

First guilty plea agreed to in college bribery scandal

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER
Associated Press

BOSTON — A packaged-food entrepreneur from California became the first of the 33 parents charged in the college bribery scandal to agree to plead guilty, disclosing the deal Wednesday as Hollywood actresses Felicity Huffman and Lori Loughlin appeared in court along with some of the other defendants.

Peter Jan Sartorio, 53, was accused of paying \$15,000 in cash to have someone correct his daughter's answers on the ACT college entrance exam. The exact charges to which he planned to plead were not immediately clear.

The two actresses and Loughlin's fashion designer husband, Mossimo Giannulli, said little during the brief hearing in a packed Boston courtroom and were not asked to enter a plea. They remain free on bail. Several other parents were given similar hearings of a few minutes each. The proceedings came three weeks after 50 people in all were charged with taking part in a scheme in which parents bribed coaches and helped rig test scores to get their children into some of

the nation's most selective universities, including Yale, Stanford, Georgetown and the University of Southern California.

The case — the biggest college admissions scheme ever prosecuted by the U.S. Justice Department — has roiled the world of higher education and amplified complaints the system is stacked in favor of the rich.

Loughlin, 54, who appeared in the 1980s and '90s sitcom "Full House," is accused along with Giannulli of paying \$500,000 to get their daughters admitted as recruits to the USC crew team, even though neither is a rower. Authorities said the couple helped create fake athletic profiles for their daughters by having them pose for photos on rowing machines.

The Hallmark Channel, where Loughlin starred in popular holiday movies and the series "When Calls the Heart," cut ties with her a day after her arrest.

Huffman, 56, a former "Desperate Housewives" star, is charged with paying the admissions consultant at the center of the scheme \$15,000 to have a proctor correct the answers on her daughter's SAT.

They and others are charged

with conspiracy and fraud, which carries up to 20 years in prison. But first-time offenders typically get only a fraction of that, and experts said some parents may avoid prison if they quickly agree to plead guilty.

Sartorio, the founder of an organic frozen-food company, did not appear in court Wednesday, and it was not clear when the Menlo Park, Calif. businessman would plead guilty.

Other parents charged in the case include the former co-chairman of an international law firm and the former head of a Silicon Valley venture capital firm.

Three people have pleaded guilty, including the admissions consultant, Rick Singer, and the former women's soccer coach at Yale, Rudy Meredith.

The case set off a furor over the feverish competition to get into college and the lengths to which status-seeking parents will go.

Many complained that the playing field has long been uneven, with wealthy students enjoying the advantages of private schools, tutors, test-preparation coaches, admissions consultants and big donations to colleges from their parents.



STEVEN SENNE/AP

Actress Lori Loughlin and her husband, clothing designer Mossimo Giannulli, left, depart federal court in Boston after a hearing Wednesday. Both are charged in a nationwide college admissions bribery scandal.

Teen says he is ill, boy who went missing back in 2011

Associated Press

In 2011, 6-year-old Timothy Pitzen's mother picked him up at school in Illinois, took him to the zoo and a water park, and then killed herself at a hotel, leaving a note in which she said her son was fine but that no one would ever find him.

On Wednesday, a 14-year-old boy came forward to tell authorities he is Timothy.

The boy claimed he escaped from two kidnappers in the Cincinnati area and then fled across a bridge into Kentucky.

Authorities from Timmothy's hometown of Aurora, Ill., are now checking out the teenager's story. "We've probably had thousands of tips of him popping up in different areas," Aurora police Sgt. Bill Rowley said. "We have no idea what we're driving down there for. It could be Pitzen. It could be a hoax."

Timothy Pitzen's grandmother, Alana Anderson, told WISN-TV Wednesday that authorities have told the family "very little."

"We just know a 14-year-old boy was found and went to the police," Anderson said. "We don't want to get our hopes up. We've



COURTESY OF THE AURORA POLICE DEPARTMENT/AP

A 14-year-old boy says he is Timothy Pitzen, above, who went missing eight years ago.

had false reports and false hopes before."

Police in the Cincinnati suburb of Sharonville wrote in a short incident report that the boy said Wednesday morning that he had "just escaped from two kidnappers," he described as white men with bodybuilder-type physiques. They were in a Ford SUV with Wisconsin license plates and had been staying at a Red Roof Inn.

"The City of Sharonville Police Department, like every other police agency in the greater Cincinnati area, was requested to check their Red Roof Inn hotels regarding this incident," Sharonville police said on the department's Facebook page. "To the best of our knowledge, we have no information indicating that the missing juvenile was ever in the City of Sharonville."

Texas bans clergy from execution room after Supreme Court ruling

By JAKE BLEIBERG

Associated Press

DALLAS — Texas prisons will no longer allow clergy in the death chamber after the U.S. Supreme Court blocked the scheduled execution of a man who argued his religious freedom would be violated if his Buddhist spiritual adviser couldn't accompany him.

Effective immediately, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice will permit only prison security staff into the execution chamber, a spokesman said Wednesday. The policy change comes in response to the high court's ruling staying the execution of Patrick Murphy, a member of the "Texas 7" gang of escaped prisoners.

Texas previously allowed state-employed clergy to accompany inmates into the room where they'd be executed, but its prison staff included only Christian and Muslim clerics.

In light of this policy, the Supreme Court ruled Thursday that Texas couldn't move forward with Murphy's punishment unless his Buddhist adviser or another Buddhist reverend of the state's choosing accompanied him.

One of Murphy's lawyers, David Dow, said the policy change does

not address their full legal argument and mistakes the main thrust of the court's decision.

Murphy's attorneys told the high court that executing him without his spiritual adviser in the room would violate the First Amendment right to freedom of religion. The 57-year-old — who was among a group of inmates who escaped from a Texas prison in 2000 and then committed numerous robberies, including one in which a police officer was fatally shot — became a Buddhist while in prison nearly a decade ago.

In his concurring opinion, the court's newest justice, Brett Kavanaugh, wrote that Texas had two options going forward: Allow all inmates to have a religious adviser of their religion in the execution room, or allow religious advisers only in the viewing room, not the execution room.

"The government may not discriminate against religion generally or against particular religious denominations," Kavanaugh wrote.

Prison chaplains will still be able to observe executions from a witness room and meet with inmates on death row beforehand, said Texas Department of Criminal Justice spokesman Jeremy

Desel.

The change brings Texas in line with most other death penalty states, which do not allow clergy into the execution chamber, according to Robert Dunham, a lawyer and executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center. But it is also likely to open new legal fights for America's busiest execution state, he said.

The policy change could be challenged as generally discriminating against religion and as retroactively targeting Murphy despite having a general formulation, Dunham said. If these arguments are presented to the high court, a ruling could have implications for how executions are conducted around the country, he said.

The Supreme Court's decision in Murphy's case followed a similar appeal in February when the court ruled Alabama could execute a Muslim inmate without his Islamic spiritual adviser present in the execution chamber. The court decision that allowed Dominique Ray to be executed attracted public criticism, and Dunham said the ruling staying Murphy's execution might have been an effort by the justices to avoid further blowback.

NATION

Study: Safe to transplant lungs, hearts infected with hepatitis C

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Doctors can safely transplant hepatitis C-infected lungs and hearts into people desperate for a new organ, say researchers who may have found a way to protect those patients from getting the risky virus.

The experiment, reported Wednesday, is the latest attempt to put a dent in the nation's long transplant waiting list by using organs that otherwise would be wasted, often ones from victims of the opioid epidemic.

The new twist is, instead of trying to cure hepatitis C after it took hold in transplant recipients, researchers at Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital say a faster, cheaper treatment seems to prevent infection in the first place.

"This is about not discarding organs that are medically suitable," said Dr. Ann Woolley, a Brigham infectious disease specialist who co-authored the study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Transplanting organs that could infect someone with a liver-

damaging virus sounds drastic, but the organ shortage has more hospitals giving it a try.

More than 113,000 people are on the national waiting list for a transplant; just 36,529 people got one last year. For heart or lung transplants, about 1,000 people a year die waiting.

"I knew that time was getting shorter for me," said Rexford Kelley, 71, of Searsport, Maine.

He sought out the Brigham study in hopes that accepting a lung infected with hepatitis C would mean a speedier transplant.

"I'm thankful I got the lung," said the retired state trooper, who now breathes easy enough to get back on the golf course.

Until recently, doctors tended to transplant hepatitis C-infected organs only into patients who already had that virus. But in 2016, spurred by new drugs that promised to cure hepatitis C, surgeons began experimenting with so-called mismatched transplants — giving infected kidneys to hepatitis-free recipients.

If those patients showed signs

of infection, they got three months of medicine to beat it back. Last year, small studies at the University of Pennsylvania and Johns Hopkins University showed not only were patients cured of hepatitis, the new kidney worked fine.

It was time to test more scarce transplants of lungs or hearts. Among the questions were: Would hepatitis C make it harder to transplant those more fragile organs? And, because the hepatitis medicine costs tens of thousands of dollars, could patients fare as well with a shorter — and cheaper — course of treatment?

In February, Penn researchers reported the standard three-month treatment cured 10 recipients of a hepatitis C-infected heart. One eventually died of organ rejection but the others were faring well.

Brigham researchers took a different approach. Within hours of either a heart or lung transplant, participants started taking medicine for a month in hopes of blocking hepatitis C infection rather than having to treat it.

The study detailed how about half of the 69 transplant recipients so far are faring. Six months after transplant, none showed signs of hepatitis C and their organs were functioning well. One died eight months after transplant from a bacterial infection unrelated to the hepatitis but 15 are doing well a year later.

Woolley said researchers might test even shorter treatment, noting the virus was undetectable at two weeks.

It might work "because maybe the virus hasn't had the chance to establish itself," said Dr. Peter Reese, a Penn kidney specialist who helped pioneer hepatitis C mismatch transplants but wasn't involved in the latest research.

But, "if the short course doesn't work, it's incumbent to be up front with patients about what they would do."



ADAM KNEE, BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL/AP

Dr. Mandeep Mehra, executive director of Brigham and Women's Hospital's Center for Advanced Heart Disease, checks on patient James Sullivan at the hospital in Boston in February. Sullivan received a hepatitis C-positive heart transplant.

US probes seizure risk with e-cigarettes

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. health officials are investigating whether electronic cigarettes may trigger seizures in some people who use the nicotine-vaping devices.

The Food and Drug Administration said Wednesday it has reviewed 35 reports of seizures among e-cigarette users, mainly in young people.

Regulators stressed that it's not clear whether vaping is responsible. But they said they're concerned and encouraged the public to report information about the issue.

These cases warrant "investigation into whether there is in fact a connection," FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said in a statement. Gottlieb is stepping down on Friday after nearly two years heading the agency.

Cases go back to 2010 and were reported to the FDA or poison control centers around the country.

Regulators said they detected an uptick in reports beginning in mid-2018.

While they represent a tiny fraction of Americans who have used e-cigarettes, many safety issues with foods, supplements and other consumer products can go unrecognized because reporting is voluntary.

Most e-cigarettes heat a flavored nicotine solution into an inhalable vapor.

The battery-powered devices have grown into a multibillion dollar industry though there are few standards, including how much nicotine they deliver. Additionally, many refillable e-cigarettes can be used with nicotine

formulas of varying strength.

Nicotine poisoning can cause seizures, convulsions, vomiting and brain injury. The FDA has previously warned of potentially fatal nicotine poisoning in infants and children who accidentally swallowed nicotine solutions.

The FDA is asking consumers to report problems to an online site.

The agency is seeking details about vaping brands and models and whether users who have experienced problems were also taking medications, supplements or other drugs.

A spokesman for the American Vaping Association called the FDA announcement "incredibly irresponsible," given the uncertain connection between e-cigarettes and the handful of reports cited.



THOMAS PEIPERT/AP

Oswaldo Barrientos, shown working at a marijuana grow facility near downtown Denver on Wednesday, said U.S. immigration officials blocked his application for citizenship because he works in the marijuana industry.

Pot workers link jobs to denial of US citizenship

By KATHLEEN FOODY

Associated Press

DENVER — U.S. immigration authorities blocked two immigrants' applications for citizenship because of their work in Colorado's marijuana industry, their attorneys and Denver officials said, accusing the Trump administration of quietly targeting immigrants seeking jobs in the growing field.

Oswaldo Barrientos, 30, said he began working in the marijuana industry in 2014, inspired by the research he had done into medical products after his mother's skin cancer diagnosis. He was brought to the U.S. from El Salvador as an infant and was granted a green card when he was 13.

Barrientos assumed the citizenship application process would be simple. He is fluent in English and said he has no criminal history, pays taxes and graduated high school. But during an in-person interview in November, the interviewer became focused on Barrientos' job with a state-licensed company that grows marijuana, he said.

Weeks later, he got a letter from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services denying him because of his job, his lawyers said.

"I was shocked, appalled, sad," Barrientos said. "It was a mixture of emotions. I had no idea I was going to be in this situation."

It was not clear Wednesday if people outside Colorado have been denied for the same reason. Barrientos' attorneys said they are not aware of any reported cases. They suspect people without legal representation may accept a denial quietly, hoping to

reapply or give up without approaching a lawyer.

Barrientos' attorneys Aaron Elinoff and Bryce Deanner, who specialize in immigration law in Colorado, said a second client in Colorado also was denied citizenship for her work in the marijuana industry. She asked not to be named publicly because of a new job in the medical field, they said.

Deborah Cannon, a spokeswoman for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, said the agency does not comment on individual cases. She defended decisions based on involvement with marijuana, saying the agency must follow federal law that prevents its use or sale.

The use and sale of marijuana for adults is broadly permitted in 10 states. More than 30 states allow a variety of marijuana-based products for medical purposes.

Most immigration attorneys would simply advise someone working in the marijuana industry not to apply for citizenship, even with Barrientos' qualifications, Elinoff said.

Barrientos said he plans to appeal the denial of his application. His attorneys are also considering his options in federal court.

In the meantime, he is following their advice not to leave the country and risk being barred from reentering. He plans to keep his job and calls the government's denial of his application "downright wrong."

"I'm trying to help people," he said. "We want to work hard to live the American dream. That's all I've ever wanted."

NATION

California town rejects Flintstones house

By JANIE HAR
Associated Press

HILLSBOROUGH, Calif. — Towering dinosaurs stand among fanciful mushrooms in the sloping backyard. A life-sized Fred Flintstone welcomes visitors near the front door. And by the driveway on the lawn is a giant “Yabba Dabba Do!” sign in orange, purple and red.

The latest battle in the war between government rules and property rights is playing out in a posh San Francisco suburb, where a retired publishing mogul has installed an elaborate homage to “The Flintstones” family. The bold, bulbous house is surrounded by Stone Age sculptures inspired by the 1960s cartoon, along with aliens and other oddities.

The controversy has sparked international media coverage and an online petition signed by thousands to pressure the attention-grabbing property, visible from a nearby highway.

The 2,730-square-foot house itself is not at stake, but the town of Hillsborough says Florence Fang’s multimillion-dollar property is a public nuisance and an eyesore. Officials filed a lawsuit in state court last month to make her remove the unpermitted garden installations. Fang does not live in the house but uses it to entertain.

An attorney for the 84-year-old says snobby officials want to squelch Fang’s constitutional right to enjoy her land, and promises a vigorous fight.

“Mrs. Fang has made people



TERRY CHEA/AP

The lavishly decorated Flintstone House in Hillsborough, Calif., is the subject of a property rights dispute between the owner and the town government.

smile, she’s giving them joy. What’s not to love about Dino, who acts like a dog?” said Angela Alioto, a former San Francisco supervisor. “What is wrong with these people?”

The oddly shaped house, currently painted red and purple, was designed by architect William Nicholson and built in 1976. Fang, a prominent philanthropist who once published the San Francisco Examiner, bought the property in June 2017 for \$2.8 million.

The whimsical front yard has statues of Barney and Betty Rubble, along with Fred and Wilma

Flintstone. A sign reads “No Dino Allowed” and features a purple cartoon dinosaur.

Colorful mushroom sculptures dot the front and back. A steep staircase, deemed unsafe by town officials, leads to a garden of giant metal prehistoric animals.

Mark Hudak, an attorney for Hillsborough, says the town prides itself on its rural, woody feel, and rules are in place “so neighbors don’t have to look at your version of what you would like to have, and you don’t have to look at theirs.”

The case is simple, he said.

“Whether she is building a project with amusing cartoon characters or Rodin statues or anything else, she still has to go through the process like everyone else,” he said.

Government has the right to enforce public safety codes and to ensure property owners don’t impinge on the rights of other property owners, said Tim Iglesias, a property professor at the University of San Francisco School of Law.

But Iglesias says it’s unusual for a homeowner to ignore three work-stop orders issued by the

city, as the March 13 complaint states Fang did. She also ignored an administrative order to remove the installations by Dec. 5, 2018, although she paid a \$200 fine.

“This is a situation where a very wealthy, sophisticated homeowner has basically thumbed her nose at the city consistently,” he said. “If they let her get away, then all the other wealthy people in Hillsborough can say, ‘Hey, I can do whatever I want with my property. Who cares about the planning department?’”

At a media tour of the property this week, Alioto said Fang will respond to the lawsuit with a counter-claim. She said Fang’s constitutional rights to free speech and religion were violated.

“They want everything removed. They want the dinosaurs removed,” Alioto said. “They wanted her to put a tree in front of the dinosaur, so you couldn’t see the dinosaur.”

David Levine, who specializes in civil litigation and remedies at the University of California Hastings College of the Law, said property owners flout permit regulations all the time. Usually, they pay a fine and correct any safety issues.

And as for which party might prevail in court?

“You have to figure out: Who’s the twit? They’re going to rule against the one that’s being a twit,” he said. “Is the twit the homeowner that ignored all the orders or the twits saying, ‘We don’t like Wilma and Betty?’”

Is that soy in your Whopper? Plant-based meat sales rising

By DEE-ANN DUBBIN
Associated Press

From soy-based sliders to ground lentil sausages, plant-based meat substitutes are surging in popularity. And carnivores—not vegans or vegetarians—are among the biggest consumers.

Growing demand for healthier, more sustainable food is one reason people are seeking plant-based meats. That’s also the reason behind rising sales of oat milk, cauliflower pizza crust and even coconut oil-based makeup.

“There’s a lot of messaging that plants are powerful. It feels like something that gives you a quick fix, something is really good for you,” said Melanie Bartelme, a global food analyst with the consulting firm Mintel.

Better technology and marketing wizardry is also fueling sales. Newer startups like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat—both backed by investments from Microsoft founder Bill Gates—have won over carnivores with plant-based products that look and taste like meat.

“Meat lovers don’t love the fact that their meat comes from dead animals. They love it because of the sensory pleasures and the familiarity,” said Impossible Foods CEO Pat Brown. “If we can provide the things they value and make it from plants, not only will meat lovers be willing to buy it, but they will prefer to buy it.”

Los Angeles-based Beyond Meat is sold alongside regular meat in the grocery store, not shuffled into freezers or natural food aisles like traditional veggie burgers. It’s also served at juicy burger chains like Carl’s Jr. as well as TGI Friday’s.

Impossible Foods, which is based in Silicon Valley, introduced its burgers three years ago at trendy restaurants like New York’s Momofuku Nishi. That led to partnerships with more than 5,000 restaurants in the U.S. and Asia, including the White Castle chain.

Earlier this week, Burger King became the first global quick-service restaurant to embrace the Impossible burger. It’s testing an

Impossible Whopper this spring at 59 restaurants in St. Louis.

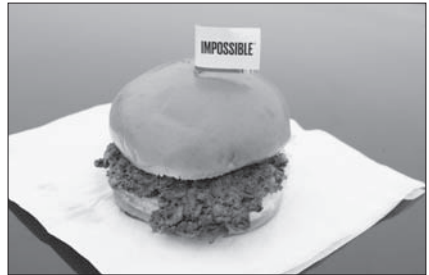
Burger King already has a veggie burger on its menu, a MorningStar Farms patty made from carrots, mushroom, oats and other ingredients. But Chris Finazzo, president of Burger King’s North American division, said that primarily appeals to vegans and vegetarians.

Burger King’s research indicated that 9% of people buying plant-based meat are vegetarian, but 90% are meat eaters looking for healthier options.

“There’s a lot of people who want to eat a burger every day but don’t necessarily want to eat meat every day,” Finazzo said.

Bartelme notes that only around 7% of the U.S. population is vegan or vegetarian and that hasn’t changed significantly in recent years. Instead, she says, many people are becoming “flexitarians,” picking and choosing from various diets.

There are other benefits to meatless burgers. Beyond Meat says it takes 99% less water, 93%



NATHAN HARRIS/AP

The Impossible Burger, a plant-based burger containing wheat protein, coconut oil and potato protein, is gaining popularity as an alternative to traditional meat burgers.

less land and 50% less energy to make plant-based burgers. They also emit 90% fewer greenhouse gases.

The North American Meat Institute, a lobbying group for the meat industry, counters that livestock production in the U.S. accounts for just 4% of total greenhouse gas emissions. U.S. meat consumption was expected to reach a record high in 2018 because of the strong economy.

Still, U.S. sales of plant-based meat are rising faster than sales

of regular meat. Nielsen says annual U.S. sales of plant-based meats jumped 42% between March 2016 and March 2019 to a total of \$888 million. Traditional meat sales rose 1% to \$85 billion in that same time frame.

Bartelme doesn’t see that trend slowing down. Over the last five years, there’s been a 25% increase in the number of meat alternative products launched, like pinto bean-based “bacon bits” from Cool Foods.

WORLD



VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV/AP

A Russian military snowmobile moves Wednesday on Kotelný Island, part of the New Siberian Islands archipelago. Russia has made reaffirming its presence in the Arctic a top goal.

Russia reaffirms its Arctic presence with updated base

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV
Associated Press

SEVERNY KLEVER MILITARY BASE, Russia — Missile launchers ply icy roads and air defense systems point menacingly into the sky at this Arctic military outpost, a key vantage point for Russia to project its power over the resource-rich polar region.

The base, dubbed Severny (Northern Clover) for its trefoil shape, is painted in the white, blue and red colors of the Russian national flag. It has been designed so soldiers can reach all of its sprawling facilities without venturing outdoors — a useful precaution in an area where temperatures often plunge to minus 58 Fahrenheit during the winter, and even in the short Arctic summer are often freezing at night.

It's strategically located on Kotelný Island, between the Laptev Sea and the East Siberian Sea on the Arctic shipping route, and permanently houses up to 250 military personnel responsible for maintaining air and sea surveillance facilities and coastal defenses like anti-ship missiles.

The Russian base has enough supplies to remain fully autonomous for more than a year.

"Our task is to monitor the airspace and the northern sea route," said base commander Lt. Col. Vladimir Pasechnik. "We have all we need for our service and comfortable living."

The Russian military has kept Western media from visiting its Arctic facilities, so the trip offered a unique opportunity to watch the Russian expansion up close.

Russia is not alone in trying to assert jurisdiction over parts of the Arctic, as shrinking polar ice opens fresh opportunities for resource exploration and new shipping lanes. The United States, Canada, Denmark and Norway are jostling for position, and China also has shown an increasing interest in the polar region.

But while U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has seen the Arctic through the lens of security and economic competition with Russia and China,

it has yet to demonstrate that the region is a significant priority in its overall foreign policy. The post of special U.S. representative for the Arctic has remained vacant since Trump assumed office.

Russia, however, has made reaffirming its presence in the Arctic a top goal, not the least because the region is believed to hold up to one-quarter of the Earth's undiscovered oil and gas. Russian President Vladimir Putin has cited estimates that put the value of Arctic mineral riches at \$30 trillion.

The move has alarmed Russia's neighbors, analysts say.

"In Russia, the Northern sea route has been described as a bonanza with lots of potential of economic development," said Flemming Splidsboel Hansen of the Danish Institute for International Studies. "It is likely meant as defensive, but it is being interpreted by the West as offensive."

Kristian Soeby Kristensen, a researcher at Copenhagen University in Denmark, said the problem of Russian hegemony in the Arctic was most obvious to Norway.

"Norway is a small country, whose next-door neighbor is mighty Russia, which has placed the bulk of its military capacity right next to them," Soeby Kristensen said. "Norway is extraordinarily worried."

In 2015, Russia submitted to the United Nations a revised bid for vast territories in the Arctic. It claimed over 463,000 square miles of Arctic sea shelf, extending more than 350 nautical miles from the shore.

As part of a multipronged effort to stake Russia's claims on the Arctic region, the Kremlin has poured massive resources into modernizing Soviet-era installations there.

The expanded infrastructure has allowed the Russian military to restore full radar coverage of the nation's 14,000 mile Arctic frontier and deploy fighter jets to protect its airspace.

The military also has undertaken a cleanup effort across the region.

Report says Ethiopian jet crew followed procedures

By ELIAS MESERET
Associated Press

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — The crew of the Ethiopian Airlines jet that crashed shortly after takeoff last month performed all of the procedures recommended by Boeing when the plane started to nosedive but could not save it, according to a preliminary report released Thursday by Ethiopia's government.

The report was based on data from the recorders of the Boeing 737 Max 8.

The Max 8 has been under scrutiny since a Lion Air flight crashed off the coast of Indonesia under similar circumstances in October.

Investigators are looking into the role of a flight-control system known by its acronym, MCAS, which under some circumstances can automatically lower the plane's nose to prevent an aerodynamic stall. The Max has been grounded worldwide pending a software fix that Boeing is rolling out, which still needs approval from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and other regulators.

The Ethiopian Airlines jet crashed just after taking off from Addis Ababa on March 10, killing all 157 on board.

Ethiopian investigators did not

specifically mention the MCAS, but recommended that Boeing review "the aircraft flight control system related to the flight controllability." They also recommended that aviation officials verify that issues have been adequately addressed before allowing the planes to fly again.

The FAA, which must certify the 737 Max is safe before it can go back into the air, said in a statement that the investigation is still in its early stages.

"As we learn more about the accident and findings become available, we will take appropriate action," the agency said.

Boeing is working on improvements to the MCAS software that would make it less aggressive in pointing the nose down and easier for pilots to disable. The FAA has said it will review the software before allowing the Max to fly again.

What isn't clear is whether the Ethiopian pilots followed Boeing's recommendations to the letter in dealing with the system repeatedly pointing the nose down.

The pilots initially followed Boeing's emergency steps by disconnecting the MCAS system, but for an unknown reason, they turned the system back on, an official familiar with the crash investigation told The Associated

Press on Wednesday. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because, at the time, Ethiopian investigators had not released their preliminary report.

Boeing's procedures instruct pilots to leave the MCAS system disconnected and continue flying manually for the rest of the flight. Ethiopian investigators did not address that issue at a press conference to release the preliminary report, saying only that the pilots had done what they were supposed to.

"The crew performed all the procedures repeatedly provided by the manufacturer but was not able to control the aircraft," said Minister of Transport Dagmawit Moges.

David Hasse, an aviation analyst and editor of industry publication *airliners.de* in Berlin, said it is significant that the report found that the pilots followed the proper procedures because that links the case more closely to the Lion Air crash.

"What is special about this case is that two crashes seem to have a very, very similar reason," Hasse said. "This is something that is very rare in aviation. The question is whether the Boeing 737 Max should have been grounded after the Lion Air crash and before the Ethiopian Airlines crash."

The Great East Japan Earthquake

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A DOCUMENTATION OF THE U.S. FORCES' RELIEF EFFORTS.

WORLD

Man faces 89 charges in New Zealand attack

By Nick Perry
Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — The man accused of carrying out the Christchurch mosque attacks will face 50 murder charges and 39 attempted murder charges when he makes his second court appearance, New Zealand police said Thursday.

Police had earlier filed a single, representative murder charge against Australian Brenton Harrison Tarrant, 28. He is due to appear via video link during a brief hearing on Friday, and won't be required to enter a plea.

Fifty people died in the March 15 attacks on two mosques and another 50 were injured.

Police said in a brief statement that they were considering filing more charges against Tarrant but couldn't comment further as the case was before the court.

Tarrant's first appearance was on the day after the attacks in the Christchurch District Court. His case has now been moved to the High Court due to the seriousness of the charges. Tarrant has reportedly been moved to a high-security prison in Auckland, which is why he'll appear via video link.

During the scheduled court hearing, media photographs won't be allowed and reporting on the proceedings will be severely restricted under New Zealand law. The intent of the law is to avoid the possibility the reporting and images would taint the views of potential jurors before they hear evidence in court.

Judge Cameron Mander said in a note that the brief hearing will be about the accused gunman's legal representation.

The judge said he had received applications from 25 media organizations to take film, photographs or audio recordings of Friday's hearing but had denied all of them. He said reporters could remain throughout and take notes, although would be restricted in what they could report.

He said media could still use pixelated images of Tarrant which the district court judge had allowed.

New Zealand's Department of Corrections said in an email they wouldn't answer questions such as where Tarrant was being held due to operational security reasons.



KT Corp. Vice President Lee Pil-jae, second from right, and models introduce 5G services Tuesday in Seoul, South Korea. South Korean carriers turned on the 5G networks Wednesday, hours ahead of U.S. carriers. The signs read: "Play with the world with KT 5G."

APR. YOUNG-JOON/AP

S. Korea jumps ahead of US with 5G network

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's telecommunications carriers turned on super-fast 5G mobile internet networks abruptly ahead of schedule in an attempt to ensure the country becomes the first in the world to launch the services.

The carriers say 5G-enabled smartphones are capable of downloading data 20 times faster than existing 4G devices, which in theory would enable users to download movie files almost instantly. The faster networks would also improve live broadcasts and streaming services for music and video while allowing for a broader range of virtual reality services, the companies say.

The 5G networks of the three South Korean mobile operators went live at 11 p.m. Wednesday, hours before U.S. carrier Verizon turned on its 5G net-

work in some areas of Minneapolis and Chicago a week ahead of schedule. The carriers had initially planned to start their 5G services on Friday, but moved up to stay ahead of Verizon. The change came hours after a meeting between the carriers and government regulators, who modified service terms so the companies could sign up users earlier.

However, the South Korean 5G services were initially available only to a few individuals selected as brand promoters, including figure skating superstar Yuna Kim, who SK Telecom announced as one of its "first customers."

Regular customers in capital Seoul and some other major cities will be able to sign up for 5G services starting on Friday. The carriers plan to expand their coverage to 85 cities across the country by the end of the year.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Wind turbine fire draws spectators; no injuries

MI ELKTON — A wind turbine fire in Michigan sent black smoke billowing into the air and drew spectators who watched as flaming debris fell to the ground.

No injuries were reported following the fire in Huron County near the village of Elkton, about 100 miles north of Detroit.

Jared Schuette, who owns the property where the turbine is located, told WNNM-TV it's "a small town and everyone was coming from everywhere to record it and take pictures."

Crews couldn't reach the fire that was at the top of the turbine, so it was left to burn itself out, officials said.

Man who stole car, used stun gun jailed

OR PORTLAND — A Portland man who tried to use a stun gun on a cashier at a McDonald's drive-thru while in a stolen car with his kids inside was sentenced to more than four years in prison.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported a witness saw Omar Rashad Greely try to shock the cashier and flagged down a nearby Multnomah County sheriff's deputy on Aug. 22, 2017, according to court documents.

After the deputy ordered Greely to stop, he started revving his engine and drove off, but not before his two sons — ages 11 and 12 — dashed from the car, a probable cause affidavit said.

Greely pleaded no contest to unauthorized use of a motor vehicle as part of a plea deal.

2 students accused of jamming school's Wi-Fi

NJ SECAUCUS — Authorities said two northern New Jersey high school students successfully crashed their school's Wi-Fi network on multiple occasions to get out of taking exams.

The two Secaucus High School freshmen are charged with computer criminal activity and conspiracy. Authorities said the 14-year-old boys used an app or a computer program to compromise the network, and apparently took requests from other students to bring it down.

The boys' names have not been released. The charges stem from an investigation that began after school officials notified police.

Police: Homeless man stole vet's wheelchair

WV MILTON — Police in West Virginia said a man stole a motorized wheelchair belonging to a disabled veteran. Prince Livingston Herald Dispatch reported Kevin Bradley Call, 41, of Nitro was arrested on charges including grand larceny. Milton police said the wheelchair was parked outside the veteran's apartment complex when it was taken.

Police posted on Facebook about the theft and the chair was returned the next day with minor



DAVID CRIGGER, BRISTOL (TENN.) HERALD COURIER/AP

Race to finish

With a banner of former NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt at upper right, workers perform maintenance on the illuminated signage on the Tower E elevator in Bristol, Tenn., on Monday in preparation for a full schedule of racing this weekend.

damage. Police said officers continued investigating the theft and connected it to Call, who was staying at a garage in a nearby alley and said he was homeless.

Teen youngest pilot to fly solo around world

LA MONROE — It's now official: A Louisiana teenager is the youngest pilot to fly solo around the world. Look up "Mason Andrews" at www.guinnessworldrecords.com, and there he is: "Youngest person to circumnavigate by aircraft, solo."

The Monroe resident was 18 years and 163 days old when he landed his Piper PA-32 Lance in Monroe on Oct. 6. The previous record-holder, Lachlan Smart, of

Queensland, Australia, was 71 days older.

Andrews' trip took 180 flight hours over 76 days, including nearly three weeks stuck in the Philippines by typhoons.

The News-Star reported that Andrews' family learned during the weekend that his record had been certified.

Snow melt this year among the earliest

AK ANCHORAGE — Meteorologists said they measured less than 1 inch of snow for the first time in 102 days at the Anchorage airport last weekend, possibly marking the onset of spring.

The Anchorage Daily News reported that National Weather

Service forecasters don't expect more accumulation in the city, making this year's snow melt the fourth earliest on record.

The mark of less than 1 inch of snow isn't usually reached until mid-April.

Meteorologist Rebecca Anderson said the earliest melt on record was March 22, 2016.

Landowner: Pack of dogs killed 15 animals

NC RAEFORD — A North Carolina landowner said a pack of dogs went on a rampage at a farm and killed at least a dozen animals, including a 500-pound llama.

Landowner Pat Belskie told media outlets the dogs dug under a fence at the Hoke County farm

THE CENSUS

38 The number of arrests Utah police made during the first month of a new drunken driving law. The Salt Lake Tribune reported that 38 people were arrested in January under the state's DUI law implemented that month. Authorities said the statute lowers the legal blood alcohol level for drivers to 0.05. Officials said Utah has the toughest anti-drunken driving law in the nation, with most other states placing a limit of 0.08 percent blood alcohol content.



in March to get at the animals. She said the dogs killed a dozen baby goats, adding that the llama tried to protect the goats but the dogs "ripped him apart."

Belskie said at least three dogs were involved, adding that they have been terrorizing livestock in the area for months.

Man in 'MAGA' hat slashes man's hand

CA SAN FRANCISCO — San Francisco police are searching for a man who wore a red "Make America Great Again" hat and used a sword to slash another man's hand after an argument outside a roller-skating rink.

The San Francisco Chronicle reported that the suspect fled the scene outside the Church of 8 Wheels, leaving his victim bleeding profusely on the sidewalk.

Officer Robert Rueca told the newspaper the man wearing the MAGA hat approached the victim and the two started arguing. He said the victim tried to grab the hat when the suspect pulled out a sword and cut him.

Shop owner charged with denting cars

MA BOSTON — Authorities said the owner of two Massachusetts auto body shops was charged with using sledgehammers and mallets to further damage cars he was repairing in order to get higher insurance payouts.

Attorney General Maura Healey said Adam Haddad, 42, of Shrewsbury was indicted on 42 charges, including 18 counts of insurance fraud.

Authorities said Haddad owns Accurate Collision Inc. in Worcester and ADH Collision of Boston Inc. in Everett.

The attorney general said surveillance footage shows him using mallets, sledgehammers and pieces of wood to intentionally damage vehicles to inflate appraisal repair quotes. He would then allegedly pocket the insurance payout and not complete repairs.

From wire reports

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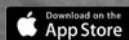
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BUSINESS/WEATHER

Researcher finds bias in facial recognition

By Matt O'Brien
Associated Press

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Facial recognition technology was already seeping into everyday life — from your photos on Facebook to police scans of mugshots — when Joy Buolamwini noticed a serious glitch: Some of the software couldn't detect dark-skinned faces like hers.

That revelation sparked the Massachusetts Institute of Technology researcher to launch a project that's having an outsized influence on the debate over how artificial intelligence should be deployed in the real world.

Her tests on software created by brand-name tech firms such as Amazon uncovered much higher error rates in classifying the gender of darker-skinned women than for lighter-skinned men.

Along the way, Buolamwini has spurred Microsoft and IBM to improve their systems and irked Amazon, which publicly attacked her research methods. On Wednesday, a group of AI scholars, including a winner of computer science's top prize, launched a spirited defense of her work and called on Amazon to stop selling its facial recognition software to police.



Massachusetts Institute of Technology facial recognition researcher Joy Buolamwini stands for a portrait on Feb. 13 at the school in Cambridge, Mass.

Her work has also caught the attention of political leaders in statehouses and Congress and led some to seek limits on the use of computer vision tools to analyze human faces.

"There needs to be a choice," said Buolamwini, a graduate student and researcher at MIT's Media Lab. "Right now, what's happening is these technologies are being deployed widely with-

out oversight, oftentimes covertly, so that by the time we wake up, it's almost too late."

Buolamwini is hardly alone in expressing caution about the fast-moving adoption of facial recognition by police, government agencies and businesses from stores to apartment complexes. Many other researchers have shown how AI systems, which look for patterns in huge troves of

data, will mimic the institutional biases embedded in the data they are learning from. For instance, if AI systems are developed using images of mostly white men, the systems will work best in recognizing white men.

Those disparities can sometimes be a matter of life or death. One recent study of the computer vision systems that enable self-driving cars to "see" the road shows they have a harder time detecting pedestrians with darker skin tones.

What's struck a chord about Buolamwini's work is her method of testing the systems created by well-known companies. She applies such systems to a skin-tone scale used by dermatologists, then names and shames those that show racial and gender bias.

Buolamwini, who's also founded a coalition of scholars, activists and others called the Algorithmic Justice League, has blended her scholarly investigations with activism.

A Buolamwini-led study published just over a year ago found disparities in how facial-analysis systems built by IBM, Microsoft and the Chinese company Face Plus Plus classified people by gender. Darker-skinned women were

the most misclassified group, with error rates of up to 34.7%. By contrast, the maximum error rate for lighter-skinned males was less than 1%.

Buolamwini said a major message of her research is that AI systems need to be carefully reviewed and consistently monitored if they're going to be used on the public. Not just to audit for accuracy, she said, but to ensure face recognition isn't abused to violate privacy or cause other harms.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro cents (April 5)	\$1.1517
Dollar buys (April 5)	€0.8663
British pound (April 5)	£1.35
Japanese yen (April 5)	¥109.00
South Korean won (April 5)	₩1,106.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.3112
Canada (Dollar)	1.3357
China (Yuan)	6.7182
Denmark (Krone)	6.6560
Egypt (Pound)	17.2955
Euro	\$1.1214/0.8918
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8493
Hungary (Forint)	205.51
Israel (Shekel)	3.5967
Japan (Yen)	111.58
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3045
Norway (Krone)	8.5838
Philippines (Peso)	52.28
Poland (Zloty)	3.83
Saudi (Riyal)	3.7516
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3546
South Korea (Won)	1,137.95
Switzerland (Franc)	1.0000
Thailand (Baht)	31.81
Turkey (Lira)	6.6059

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.50
Discount rate	3.00
Federal funds market rate	2.40
3-month bill	2.38
30-year bond	2.93

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	\$2.957	\$3.300	\$3.552	\$3.344	\$3.444
Change in price	+6.8 cents	+7.4 cents	+7.4 cents	-0.2 cents	-
Netherlands	--	\$3.589	\$3.741	\$3.767	--
Change in price	--	+5.7 cents	+5.0 cents	-3.3 cents	--
U.K.	--	\$3.234	\$3.486	\$3.278	--
Change in price	--	+7.4 cents	+7.4 cents	-0.2 cents	--
Azores	--	--	\$3.473	--	--
Change in price	--	--	+7.4 cents	--	--
Belgium	--	\$3.004	\$3.266	\$3.462	--
Change in price	--	+21.7 cents	+16.5 cents	+4.5 cents	--
Turkey	--	--	\$3.369	\$3.161*	--
Change in price	--	--	+7.4 cents	-0.2 cents	--

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	--	\$3.339	--	\$3.129
Change in price	--	+8.0 cents	--	No change
Okinawa	--	\$2.739	--	\$3.129
Change in price	--	+7.0 cents	--	No change
South Korea	--	\$2.779	--	\$3.369
Change in price	--	+7.0 cents	--	No change
Guam	--	\$2.759**	\$3.109	\$3.359
Change in price	--	+6.0 cents	+8.0 cents	+5.0 cents

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MARKET WATCH

April 3, 2019	
Dow Jones Industrials	39.00
	26,218.13
Nasdaq composite	46.86
	7,895.55
Standard & Poor's 500	6.16
	2,873.40
Russell 2000	7.59
	1,560.91

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

WEEKEND



Maddie
& Tae

Music, Page 36



Small budget, big heart

Made for a relatively modest \$100 million, 'Shazam' is a gleefully goofy superhero film

Pages 24-25

WEEKEND: GADGETS



Keep them clean

Hard-working household appliances need TLC, too

By JURA KONCIUS
The Washington Post

Your major appliances work hard for you. So why not pay some attention to your washer, dryer, dishwasher, fridge and stove?

"Lots of people think that the function of the washing machine or the dishwasher is to clean, so it must just clean itself," says Melissa Maker, who runs a cleaning service in Toronto and the Clean My Space blog. "This isn't the case. Over time, if you don't keep these machines clean, there are things that can lead to their demise."

First, dig out each appliance's manual. If you've misplaced it, you can probably get a version of it online. You might be surprised at what you find. I just pulled out the manual for my seven-year-old KitchenAid dishwasher to see whether it had a filter I needed to clean (it doesn't). While reading it, I discovered my flatware basket has holes to fit chopsticks.

"If you want your appliances to last longer, clean them," says Becky Rapinchuk, cleaning expert and blogger at Clean Mama. "It doesn't take long and in some cases, you just push a button and let it roll."

We asked experts for ideas on the best ways to clean the major appliances in your home.

Washing machine

Many washing machines have cleaning or sanitizing cycles. You can use vinegar or washing machine cleaner (made by a number of companies including Tide and OxiClean) in that cycle to refresh your machine. Or just use those products and run a regular hot-water cycle.

The internal parts of your appliances are often kind of disregarded or seem like they don't need upkeep, but they do," says Brendan Bosch, marketing director for Affresh, a washing-machine cleaning tablet made by Whirlpool. Cleaning the interiors is especially important in high-efficiency machines, because they use less water, and excess detergent and clothing fibers can build up inside and cause odors.

Jill Notini, a spokeswoman for the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers, says wiping down the gaskets with dish soap or vinegar is a good idea. She does not recommend bleach, because you might end up staining your clothes.

Dryer

If you're not already emptying your lint trap after every load, vow to be better about it. Buildup will clog your dryer duct and, in extreme cases, could cause a fire. Meanwhile, if you haven't had

your vent cleaned recently (by you or a professional), do an inspection. Vacuum out any lint clogged in there.

Rapinchuk pours a bit of white vinegar on a cloth and wipes down the seals on the door of her dryer frequently. You can also use that to wipe the inside of the drum.

Dishwasher

"The machine that cleans your everyday forks and spoons needs attention," says Brian Sansoni, spokesman for the American Cleaning Institute. "Yes, the utensils look clean, but you want the device to be clean inside also."

Some newer models have removable mesh filters that can clog with pieces of corn or a Lucky Charm, especially if you're not a big pre-rinser. Pop out the filter and rinse under warm running water or gently brush with a toothbrush. If you see mineral deposit buildup inside your dishwasher, put two cups of vinegar in a glass container on the bottom rack facing up and run a hot cycle, says Nathan Krygowski, senior product marketing manager at KitchenAid. This way it splashes out throughout the cycle and doesn't immediately rinse down the drain.

Refrigerator

Wiping down refrigerator shelves with warm soapy water should be part of a regular cleaning routine. But taking everything out of your refrigerator and giving it a larger dose of TLC is a worthwhile spring chore. "We've found that people don't clean refrigerators enough," Sansoni says. "It's especially important to scrub out the shelves where you keep your meats."

Pulling your refrigerator away from the wall and cleaning any debris or dust from the back of the unit and the floor is also important, Notini says. If there is a grill on the front of your refrigerator that can be removed, clean behind there and make sure air can freely flow through.

Range

If your oven has a self-cleaning cycle on it, activate it on a warm spring day when you can leave windows and doors open to air out your house during the several hours that it's cleaning itself.

To remove that baked-on gunk from your removable metal stove-top burners, Rapinchuk says, run them through the dishwasher. Or you can soak them in hot soapy water and then scrub them with a paste of kosher salt, baking soda and dish soap. Notini says most ceramic stove tops can be cleaned with warm soapy water or a vinegar and baking soda paste. Check your manual for specifics.

GADGET WATCH

This week's must-haves: Sleep aids, selfie printers

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

I'm living proof that sound machines are ideal for a quiet, restful sleep. Adaptive Sound Technologies Inc. LectorFan Micro2 not only sends

users off to dream-land at home — the multi-functional unit is built for travel with a compact (2-by-2 inches) design. The unit offers 11 built-in digital sleep sounds, including two ocean surf, five digital fans and four variations of white, pink and brown noise sound options.

Using the tiny bedside speaker is as easy as any gadget you can find. Inside is a USB rechargeable battery, which can last for up to 40 hours in sleep-sound mode.

Like any sound machine, the LectorFan takes trial and error to find the preferred sound selection and volume. The pop-up swivel design allows you to direct the speaker's sound right at you or whatever you find works best. The sounds can, and are, ideal for use during the day, helping concentrate on work tasks or just a pleasant background while around the home or office.

Bluetooth is also built into the speaker, enabling it to pair with a smartphone and stream music off your device. The battery runs for about six hours in Bluetooth mode.

I'd love to live beachside, but as long as I don't, ocean night sounds can keep seaside thoughts in my dreams.

Online: soundofsleep.com; \$34.95, available in color choices of chalk white, charcoal and metallic red



ADAPTIVE SOUND TECHNOLOGIES INC./TNS

The LectorFan Micro2 is built for travel with its compact design.

Imagine a pocket-sized device with a camera that includes a selfie mirror and a built-in printer. You've just conjured up the Polaroid Mint.

Measuring 4.5-by-3-by-0.7 inches (6.1 ounces), it's easy to see the portability with a body mirroring a deck of cards.

Inside are the camera and printer, and a rechargeable lithium-ion battery to power it.

The zero-ink technology prints are 2-by-3 inches, water-resistant, smudge-proof and tear resistant. They have a peel-off sticky-back for displaying the prints anywhere you want.

There's no ink or toner needed. With the zinc technology, everything you need is in the paper, which is available in packs of 20, 30 or 50 sheets. Loading the paper is instant and easy; just open up the paper and slide it in.

Using the printer is simply fun. It's not going to replace a regular camera or your desktop printer. But then again, it's easier to keep this in your backpack on the go.

The 16-megapixel camera can store photos on a built-in microSD memory card (supports cards up to 256 GB) and takes about 40 pictures on each battery charge. A low battery indicator lets you know when a USB charge is needed, and a small LED flash will go off automatically in low-light situations.

Images can be taken in three modes — color, black and white or sepia — along with adding the classic Polaroid frame.

A selfie mirror is on the front, and the timer helps photo takers jump in for group photos. A small viewfinder helps you frame your image in a vertical or landscape view.

There's also Bluetooth built into the Mint so you can print pictures from a smartphone.

The quality of the images is great. The Polaroid Mint is the first time I've combined the portability of the prints with a pocket-sized camera, and it didn't disappoint.

Online: polaroid.com; \$99.99, available in black, white, blue, red or yellow



POLAROID/TNS

WEEKEND

CHECK IT OUT

Events, entertainment and other ways to fill your free time

1



Bear Grylls hosts
"Hostile Planet."

Below: A Gelada
monkey, hippos, a sloth.
National Geographic photos



Bear Grylls, 'Hostile Planet' pull no punches

Nature programs are nothing new, but National Geographic's latest series, "Hostile Planet," takes the genre in a dangerous direction.

The main focus of "Hostile Planet" is to show the resilience of animals that survive in the most hostile environments. A segment in the new series about polar bears will be vastly different than what would have been produced 50 years ago.

"What's incredible about 'Hostile Planet,' that's never been done before, is that so many of the stories are so heart-breaking," says host Bear Grylls. "And it is an emotional thing watching 'Hostile Planet.'"

Grylls, who is also an executive producer of the six-part series, has seen much of the natural world through his jaunts around the globe. The former member of the British Special Forces starred in seven seasons of the Discovery Channel's "Man vs. Wild," which became one of the most watched shows on the planet, reaching an estimated 1.2 billion viewers.

While "Hostile Planet" will also offer stunning up-close looks at nature, Grylls predicts the reaction will be more "no, no" than "wow, this is beautiful."

Each episode spotlights a unique environment — mountains, oceans, grasslands, jungles, deserts and polar.

Grylls says he sees the animals exhibiting the sort of resilience, adaptability, resourcefulness, intelligence and community he needed on "Man vs. Wild."

"They're all learning to work together. Where they don't have strength or speed, they're having to be resourceful and clever and communicate. We're seeing seals communicating to battle off sharks. We're seeing polar bears learning to hunt whales. We're seeing jaguars learning to hunt in the water for crocodiles," Grylls says. "Stuff you'd think, 'That's science fiction. That doesn't really happen.'"

— Rick Bentley/Tribune News Service

• 'Hostile Planet' premieres Saturday on AFN-Spectrum.

2

Ape Out a throwback thrill

Those who crave open-world gaming experiences rendered in high-definition splendor have many options. But if you'd prefer something simple, Ape Out offers a rollicking brawler about an ape and the people standing in the way of its freedom. Its simple aesthetic evokes the audiovisual styles of the 1950s. Its percussive jazz soundtrack, bold colors and unabashed violence work well together. In short, it's sheer fun.

• Review on Page 26.

3



History
Channel

'Jesus: His Life' on AFN

Easter comes later than usual this year, but for those looking to get into the spirit, "Jesus: His Life" awaits. The eight-part miniseries explores the story of Jesus Christ through people close to him. Each episode is told from a different biblical character's perspective.

• 'Jesus: His Life' premieres Tuesday on AFN-Prime.

4

Maddie & Tae get new start

Country duo Maddie & Tae were dealt a blow worthy of a country song when Dot Records, which released their first album, went out of business. The ladies used the unexpected extra time to double down and go deeper on their writing and subject matter. Their upcoming record, "One Heart to Another," is all the better for it.

• Profile on Page 36.

WEEKEND: MOVIES

By JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

“**S**hazam!” is one of those movies with a perfect elevator pitch.

Everywhere along its path to production, the same phrase guided its makers: “‘Big’ meets ‘Superman.’” As a tale about a 14-year-old boy who finds that he can transform into a powerful adult superhero version of himself with a simple command (“Shazam!”), Penny Marshall’s classic 1988 comedy was an obvious touchstone for both its body-changing plot and its sweet sense of humor. If you didn’t sense the connection immediately in “Shazam!,” you will by the time a giant floor piano makes a cameo.

“Shazam!” is the latest superhero movie to look further afield than comic book mythology for inspiration. Just as the gritty Wolverine thriller “Logan” drew from Westerns like “Shane,” and “Black Panther” was built as a Bond-like spy movie, the PG-13-rated “Shazam!” has its DNA rooted in 1980s adventure-comedies, especially the Amblin Entertainment variety like “Goonies” and “Gremlins.”

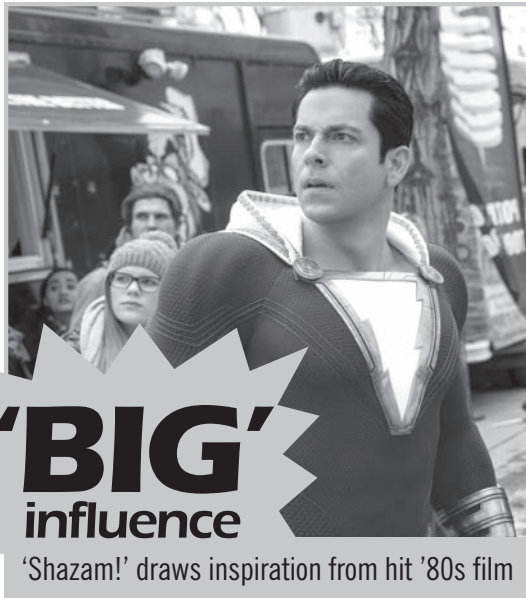
The superhero is, increasingly, a Trojan Horse in spandex.

“People are understanding that you can tell a lot of different types of stories under the superhero banner,” says “Shazam!” producer Peter Safran, who also produced “Aquaman” and who manages “Guardians of the Galaxy” director James Gunn. “They don’t all have to be world-ending, epic spectacles. You can tell great family stories. It can be a heist movie. It can be a horror movie, which I believe something like ‘Aquaman’ (spinoff) ‘The Trench’ could be.”

By going small, “Shazam!” (made for a relatively modest \$100 million) is poised to be one of the biggest successes in Warner Bros.’ DC Comics films.

For the makers of “Shazam!,” the film has a kind of elemental superhero appeal based on the dream of becoming a superhero. Where other superhero movies are otherworldly, “Shazam!” and its hero are gleefully goofy.

“I feel bad for a lot of other actors who end up being superheroes,” says Zachary Levi, who stars as the supersized version of Billy Batson, played by Asher Angel as a kid Levi. His breakthrough series, the spy comedy “Chuck,” had some of the



same flavor: “Most other superheroes are cool and collected and brooding. They’re saving the world. Billy Batson is one of very few who gets to be very stoked. It’s not like a responsibility; it’s crazy cool.”

The ironic thing is that “Shazam!” dates back to the early days of comics. It was created in 1939, a year after Superman, and very much conceived as a knockoff of the Man of Steel. Then, the hero was called Captain Marvel (nickname: the Big Red Cheese) and at times, he even outdid Superman in the 1940s. A 1941 black-and-white Captain Marvel serial was one of the very first comic book adaptations.

But by the early ‘50s, a copyright infringement lawsuit from DC Comics finally caught up to Captain Marvel’s

publisher, Fawcett Comics, shutting the character down. A strange afterlife followed. In 1967, Marvel’s own Captain Marvel — same name, different hero — debuted. By 1972, the original Captain Marvel — sold by Fawcett to DC — was reintroduced as Shazam.

It’s a head-spinning twist of fate that all these decades later, both Captain Marvels arrived in theaters almost simultaneously.

“For them to come out basically in the same month is insane,” says Safran. “We never really worried about it because it’s such a different type of movie. It’s such a different tone of movie.”

The big-screen debut of “Shazam!” took so long not just because of legal tangles but because of the film’s unique tone. Soon

after development at New Line first began in the 2000s, dark and brooding were in, thanks largely to “The Dark Knight.” A number of writers took a crack at it, including William Goldman (“All the President’s Men”), in a string of stalled iterations.

As the possibilities for superhero films expanded, led by Marvel’s “Guardians of the Galaxy,” “Shazam!” found its way through just as DC’s Superman and Batman revivals were happening. Initially, plans centered on a combo of Shazam and supervillain Black Adam, with Dwayne Johnson signed up as Black Adam. That character is now expected to get his own movie.

“There was no mandate to try to tie Shazam into the larger DC universe or do anything with Black Adam,” says Safran. “It was just: This guy deserves the real estate to go tell a stand-alone origin story.”

An unlikely team assembled around Henry Gayden’s screenplay. Swedish filmmaker David F. Sandberg, who helmed Warner Bros.’ lucrative “Conjuring” prequel, “Annabelle: Creation,” came aboard to direct. And it took a long time — Sandberg says more than 100 auditions — for them to find their Shazam.

“He was an unknown to me. I had never seen ‘Chuck,’” says Sandberg of Levi. “It was a long process of doing lots and lots of auditions with very different people to try to find the right person. That was our stipulation: You have to audition. We have to make sure you can play a child, which is something most adults never do. It’s not like you have references in other movies.”

Levi, 38, initially turned down the audition, skeptical anything would come of it.

“I asked my agent, ‘Aren’t they looking for huge jacked dudes or at the very least very famous ones?’” says Levi. “I was like: This feels like I’m going to be wasting everybody’s time.”

Levi later sent in an audition tape for another part. That night, Sandberg and Safran called him to say he was right for Shazam.

“I was flabbergasted,” says Levi. “I’ve always been a bit of a Peter Pan-syndromed person. I hope in the best of ways.”

Within a week, he was cast, and Levi, a lifelong Tom Hanks fan, found himself realizing a fantasy he never expected to fulfill.

“I always wanted to do something like ‘Big,’ but you don’t want to remake something that’s never been touched,” says Levi. “So when would I ever do ‘Big’?”

DC superhero pic ‘Shazam!’ is a joy

By LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

Holy superhero fatigue, Batman, “Shazam!” is actually good.

OK, so it’s basically “Big” with superheroes and villains instead of businesspeople and girlfriends, but director David F. Sandberg has infused his film with so much heart and charm that it hardly matters. Even the deficiencies, like the sluggish beginning and the random, ridiculous villains, fade away under a haze of goodwill because unlike so many big spectacle action pics with sequel in mind, “Shazam!” actually sticks the landing.

Perhaps I’m getting ahead of myself. Don’t worry if you don’t happen to know anything about “Shazam!” or are convinced that you won’t care. I certainly didn’t. Plus, there are a lot of superheroes to keep track of these days and someone who needs an

exclamation point is and should be immediately suspect.

The movie isn’t here to judge any lack of knowledge, though. It’s an origin story about a jaded 14-year-old Philadelphia foster kid, Billy Batson (Asher Angel), who’s bestowed with superpowers by Djimon Hounsou (naturally). As Shazam, he’s physically altered into an adult and takes the form of Zachary Levi. But of course, even with his height, his muscles, his voice and even his powers, he’s still very much a kid and has a lot to learn.

Those are the basics, but the spirit really comes from the smart writing, the pitch-perfect casting and the supporting world around Billy and Shazam. Right before he gets his powers, he’s placed in a new group foster home led by Rosa (Marta Milans) and Victor Vasquez (Cooper Andrews) that’s full of quirky characters: Freddy (Jack Dylan Grazer), a disabled superhero obsessive with a biting wit; Eu-

gene (Ian Chen), a violent video game obsessive; Darla (Faith Herman), the adorable youngest; Mary (Grace Fulton) and Pedro (Jovan Armand). The young actors assembled here are astounding, and immediately captivating, especially Grazer as Freddy and Herman as Darla, who nearly steal the show.

Freddy, with his wealth of superhero knowledge, helps Billy/Shazam figure out what to do with these new, strange talents. The training montages have a terrific comedic sensibility, and Grazer and Levi are perfectly matched for the job. Levi in particular pulls off the tricky feat of playing a disaffected, but still fairly innocent young teenager while wearing spandex and a cape, no less. Grazer, meanwhile, who we’ve seen before in “It,” is beyond his years with his ability to draw a laugh.

That’s not to say the movie is perfect. The beginning gives an extended origin story for both



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT/AP

A teenager transforms into a superhero in “Shazam!” starring Zachary Levi, right, and Jack Dylan Grazer.

Billy and the little boy who will grow up to become the megalomaniac villain, Dr. Thaddeus Sivana (Mark Strong). Sivana is woefully underwritten, too, although Strong does his best. For the most part, it comes across as less of a threat and more of a buzzkill that gets in the way of all the fun we were having with Freddy and Shazam.

There’s also a running gag about a strip club that seemed a little retrograde for a current film. But, nicksies aside, “Shazam!” is just a lightning bolt of unexpected joy that is certainly worth your time and money.

“Shazam!” is rated PG-13 for intense sequences of action, language, and suggestive material. Running time: 132 minutes.

WEEKEND: MOVIES



Photos courtesy of Paramount Pictures

Based on the novel by Stephen King, "Pet Sematary" tells the story of a doctor (Jason Clarke) whose grief over the loss of his daughter leads him to a mysterious burial ground where the dead can be resurrected.

All bark and no bite

'Pet Sematary' remake suffers from being too analytical in its exploration of guilt, grief

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

It's pretty ironic for a remake of an '80s horror classic to choose the tagline "sometimes dead is better," especially when "Pet Sematary" itself is a cautionary tale about the dangers of reviving the things you love. The story, and the tagline, practically beg one to apply the meta logic to the film itself. And just like the reanimated kitties, this remake of Mary Lambert's truly chilling

1989 adaptation of Steven King's novel just isn't the same after being dragged out of the grave.

Kevin Kolsch and Dennis Widmyer direct a script by Matt Greenberg and Jeff Buhler that hews closely to the original until it diverges wildly, making a few choices that vastly change the tone and story. The film follows a young family who moves to a new home outside of the city for a quieter life. That quiet life is never achieved, thanks to a backyard full of pet corpses and a meddling neighbor who

shows them they never really have to say goodbye to the ones they love.

Lambert's film, adapted for the screen by King himself, is a weird, moving, weirdly moving rumination on the ways in which repressed trauma and grief can become so intense it mutates monstrously. The remake is more concerned with existential questions about the afterlife and whether or not it exists. It pulls the thread on the question of who bears the responsibility for the deaths of loved ones, and it purports to explore how that guilt can corrupt the human psyche. Lambert and King's film is more purely emotional, where Kolsch and Widmyer's is analytical. And for that, it suffers.

However, where it excels is in casting — Jason Clarke, he of the wounded eyes and the Sad Dad energy, is the exact right actor for the role of Louis "Doc" Creed, a smart, steady doctor who slowly becomes unhinged as he suffers loss after loss. Filmmaker and actress Amy Seimet brings a mental vulnerability to Louis' wife, Rachel, tormented by her memories of the gruesome death of her sister in childhood. Young Jete Laurence is a perfect creepy kid as their daughter Ellie, and it's eerie how much the twins cast as young baby Gage bear such a strong resemblance to the unforgettable Miko Hughes.

"Pet Sematary" finesses some of the bumpy narrative moments from the original, but where it forges its own path is in rewriting Ellie's story. This is initially intriguing, but it ultimately reveals itself to be the less original choice, relying on horror archetypes and tropes we've seen before. It's just the same old routine, but rendered without any actual scares or even a scrap of suspense. It inspires laughter instead of screams, which is disappointing when the original film remains so surprising, spooky and strange 30 years later.

In its attempt to breathe new life into the iconic title while respectfully paying homage to its legacy, the new iteration of "Pet Sematary" overpromises and underdelivers. For all its concern about the afterlife and what it might be like, the film teases something truly terrifying without ever offering a glimpse. This "Pet Sematary" is all bark and no bite.

"Pet Sematary" is rated R for horror violence, bloody images and some language. Running time: 101 minutes.

'Best of Enemies' misses mark in telling true story of Klansman, activist

By MARK JENKINS
The Washington Post

In a time and place where blacks and whites rarely cooperate, a Ku Klux Klan leader agrees to help lead public meetings on the subject of possible school desegregation. The process transforms his life — and, by the way, everyone else's — in "The Best of Enemies."

Yes, this is another semi-historical civil rights drama about a white guy. Writer-director Robin Bissell trains the spotlight on C.P. Ellis (Sam Rockwell), a gas station owner and KKK "Exalted Cyclops" who liberalizes his outlook while collaborating with African American community activist Ann Atwater (Taraji P. Henson) in Durham, N.C., in 1971.

As in "Green Book," the emphasis is defensible in terms of dramatic development: Ellis, not Atwater, is the one who changes as "The Best of Enemies" skillfully follows the uplift-movie formula. But that doesn't make

its scenario any less irksome.

The actual Ellis and Atwater really did become friends, but Bissell doesn't scrupulously follow the 1996 book (by Osha Gray Davidson) and 2002 documentary ("An Unlikely Friendship") that inspired him. Many of the details are fictional, although the movie is more faithful to the actual events than "Remember the Titans," another desegregation fable set in 1971.

The movie's Ellis is a mean-spirited, gun-toting racist with only one sensitive spot: his children. He comes to understand African American parents' fears for their kids after Atwater points out that his is vulnerable, too. Ellis and his wife (Anne Heche) are particularly anguished about their son who has Down syndrome.

After a fire damages an all-black school, Durham leaders ponder allowing the students to attend an all-white school. To settle the issue, the city council reluctantly agrees to a series of parleys led by Atwater,



STX FILMS/AP

"The Best of Enemies" tells the true story of the friendship between a civil rights activist and a Ku Klux Klan leader. Starring Sam Rockwell (left), Babou Ceesay and Taraji P. Henson.

Ellis and a facilitator (Babou Ceesay, whose British accent sometimes asserts itself). At the conference's end, a panel of six blacks and six whites will vote on desegregation. Eight "ayes" are needed for passage, so at least two whites must vote for the

controversial change.

(In reality, of course, integration was necessitated by Brown v. Board of Education, not smoke damage.)

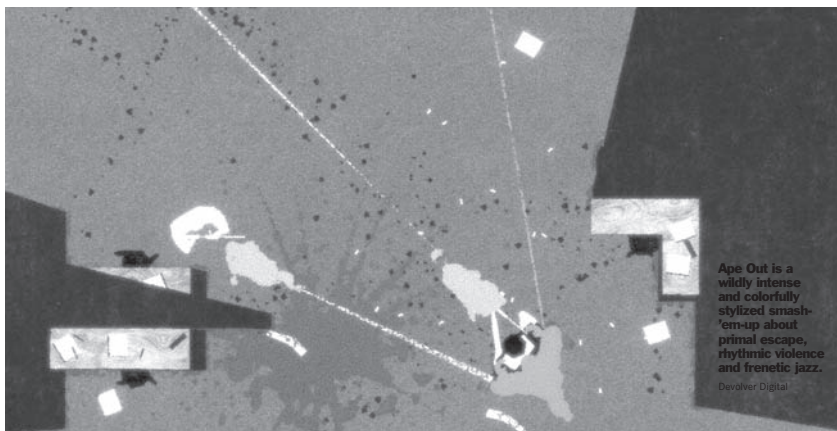
The two youngest white members of the group appear inclined to ditch school segrega-

tion, but perhaps one of them can be intimidated. That would leave the deciding vote to Ellis, whose ultimate decision won't surprise the Hollywood-savvy viewer — even though the movie's melodramatically protracted climax plays his announcement as if it's a shocker.

Bissell, executive producer of "The Hunger Games," has crafted effective mainstream entertainment, topped with a pleasing dollop of righteousness. But subtlety is not in his repertoire. The mosty short scenes are often overpowered by pop songs — including incongruous choices from Donovan and David Bowie's back catalogues — and Henson's performance is so broad it verges on farcical. "The Best of Enemies" is perhaps the first account of the United States' traumatic racial history that could be adapted into a sitcom.

"The Best of Enemies" is rated PG-13 for mature thematic material, racial epithets, some violence and a suggestive reference. Running time: 132 minutes.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



A wild, percussion-driven romp

Smash away angst while enjoying striking visuals, a 1950s analog vibe in Ape Out

By Christopher Byrd

Special to The Washington Post

Everyone runs from a fiery ape, even the flame-throwers. That's one of the less nutty thoughts I had while playing Ape Out, a rollicking brawler about an ape and the people standing between its captivity and its freedom.

There is a brutal simplicity to Ape Out reminiscent of the arcade games of the 1950s. Ape Out plays like an underground cartoon caught on film stock set to percussion-driven jazz. I dug it so much I let loose an "Amen!" when the final credits splashed across the screen and the music crashed in with thunderous conviction.

This straightforward scenario is stupendously energized by the game's aesthetic sensibility which evokes the audiovisual styles of the 1950s. Ape Out plays like an underground cartoon caught on film stock set to percussion-driven jazz. I dug it so much I let loose an "Amen!" when the final credits splashed across the screen and the music crashed in with thunderous conviction.

The game opens on a caged ape, from an overhead perspective. Above and below its cage are helpful hints: Left stick. Right trigger. Input that elementary controller sequence and the ape busts out, the drums kick in, and with a snap, Ape Out sets a mood.

Take a few steps out of the cage

and you'll see it says "Disc One: Subject 4" on the floor. The title corresponds to the first of Ape Out's four LPs. Complete the stage and you can ogle the Subject 4 album cover with its tastefully understated design and its inscription, "gorilla loves company, copyright 1954."

Just as each of the game's four main albums is divided into a Side A and a Side B, so are its stages. Accentuating the whole analog vibe, at the end of each stage a cue mark appears in the top corner of the screen, furthering the illusion that a projectionist is working behind the scenes to change flickering film reels.

Though there is a pacifist achievement for completing a stage without killing anyone, I have yet to earn it. For most of my playthrough I took the path of least resistance and wallowed in unabashed ultraviolence.

Except for some workers in a food court, pretty much everyone else has a gun and will shoot the ape on sight. Enemies, however, can be grabbed and used as human shields or flung into the distance, which dazes them, providing a temporary window to scout out of their range of fire. An enemy can also be flung into a wall or, given sufficiently close range, at another person, causing them to explode into bits.

From there, you can pick up, say,



There is a brutal simplicity to Ape Out reminiscent of the arcade games of the past. Almost everyone in it is an adversary. Yet fighting isn't as important as getting from one side of the screen to the other, to an exit, as fast as possible.

an arm and fling that at someone to temporarily stun them. Ape Out's dynamic soundtrack reacts as things get wilder. A splattered body or a received gunshot would might meet with a cymbal crash or an added drum fill. Aside from the music, the game's striking visual palette, which recalls the bold use of color practiced by the Abstract Expressionists, adds appreciable texture to its basic fight-or-flight premise.

In the event of death, a map of the stage appears on the screen with a white line showing one's route through it. Stages in Ape Out are procedurally generated. But while little details change, such as the placement of enemies and walls throughout a level, the overall contours of an area carry over.

Thus, every time you play Disc 2: High Rise you start on the thirty-first floor of a building and must make your way down. The game's use of mazes places it in a lineage that extends at least as far back as Pac-Man. I found Ape Out's self-conscious primitivism — the star of the game looks like an orange blob and environmental backgrounds are sparsely decorated — seductive.

I will refrain from sharing much of the psychotic babble that raced through my head as I "took hostages" and "smashed them good." Just know that if you need a safe space to get a little angst out, Ape Out is worth a swing.

Platforms: Nintendo Switch, PC
Online: devolverdigital.com/games/view/ape-out

PREVIEW

Stranger Things like a Lego game with a retro skin

It should be no surprise that the Stranger Things video game has a retro look. The Netflix series is infused with nostalgia from the 1980s, and the upcoming project for the Nintendo Switch is no different.

Creators Bonus XP took inspiration from classics such as Contra and Double Dragon to create a co-op-friendly project that follows the plot of Season 3. Similar to past releases, this is a title that lets gamers play the show but with additional content and gamified books. The developers call the experience "Season 3 plus, plus," saying the game has more content than the show.

Judging from the spoiler-free demo, Stranger Things 3: The Video Game is reminiscent of "TI Games" Lego offerings. In a co-op mode, players tackle the campaign in a split-screen, which offers more freedom of movement as they explore a labyrinthine environment. I played as Joyce (Winona Ryder), and another person took on the role of Hopper (David Harbour). Each of us had distinct traits and abilities. Hopper was a stronger brawler with a powerful and linear rush move. Joyce had a bolt cutter that let her open locked doors. Her special move was a whirlwind area-of-effect attack that's good in a crowd.

We entered rooms and suffled with ne'er-do-wells. Unlike games such as Final Fight, special moves use up blue orbs that are dropped randomly in boxes or by foes. Thankfully, they won't drain a player's health and that makes them more useful in combat.

As we explored Haskins Laboratory in a demo that was completely made up and had no connection to Season 3, my co-op buddy and I scavenged between by wrecking crates and other furniture. The scraps could be used for power-ups that increase our survival rate and other tools.

Stranger Things also has plenty of puzzles. Many of them require cooperation between partners. In one instance, Joyce had to explore a lab while Hopper shut down power to cameras and other obstacles blocking her way. Another room had the two moving blocks so that they can glide onto pressure plates. Those switches ultimately open doors. Other problems featured riddles that were mildly frustrating.

The Lego element of the game will be noticeable in the single-player mode. In this instance, players enjoy a full screen. They can switch between characters who have their own abilities. A tiny hero can enter a grate and access an area that bigger characters cannot. Players have to figure out how each of the 12 playable characters work and use them to their advantage.

Stranger Things 3: The Video Game will debut on July 4.

— Gleason Cacho
The Mercury News



More game reviews at [stripes.com/games](https://www.stripes.com/games)

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Mideast



Above: Visitors can get their caffeine fix at a tea cafe, which offers ample outdoor seating.

Right: fresh produce is readily available on the streets of Qudaihiya.



PHOTOS BY JOSHUA KARSTEN/Stars and Stripes

An Ethiopian favorite called injera, a spongy flatbread made of sourdough and served with various curries, can be found at many roadside eateries in Qudaihiya, Bahrain.



A popular Indian and Sri Lankan breakfast dish called idli, a savory rice pastry served with curry, is available throughout Qudaihiya.



Clothing and accessories are displayed at one of Qudaihiya's many shops.



Popular in many Arab countries, shisha pipes — used to smoke fruit-scented tobacco — are available for purchase.

A HIDDEN GEM

Often overlooked, Qudaihiya is a pocket of Manama where servicemembers can enjoy Middle Eastern, Asian and African cuisine, shopping and exploration

By JOSHUA KARSTEN
Stars and Stripes

Nestled within the main tourist footpaths of Juffair, Adliya and the downtown souk area of Manama, lies an often-overlooked part of this town in Bahrain.

Qudaihiya, pronounced ka-dib-ee-yah, is a pocket of the city that many servicemembers either don't know about or rarely wander through. It's an old part of town just north of the Al-Qudaihiya Palace, the palace next to the Grand Mosque.

The area is home to many migrant workers, and with that comes all the authentic restaurants. Thai, Filipino, Ethiopian, African, Pakistani, Turkish — a foodie's paradise.

"I love this part of town," said Sorada Malawajan, a Navy spouse originally from Thailand. "I am always disappointed with the [highly rated] Thai restaurants in the tourist areas because I don't get that authentic taste I'm looking for."

Malawajan explained that restaurants in Qudaihiya cater more to the locals and visiting workers rather than tourists, a feature that better replicates the various cuisines of the chefs' homelands.

Take a stroll early in the morning to get fresh breads, karak tea and breakfast that does not include pancakes. But be careful; the sidewalks and streets can make for a tumultuous trek compared to the island's shopping malls. Wear comfortable shoes and leave the baby stroller at home for a better urban hiking experience.

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Leaving the base, swing through Juffair and turn right at the Grand Mosque. Drive to Exhibitions Ave, which is a left at the first traffic light followed by a quick right. Qudaihiya Ave begins at the first roundabout. Head west, and explore.

— Joshua Karsten

One Bahraini dinar, or BD, has a fixed exchange rate with U.S. dollar at 1BD to \$2.65. But no worries; that is more than enough for a meal in Qudaihiya.

For example, a common Filipino breakfast of rice, eggs and longganisa, a handmade pork sausage popular in the Philippines, will set you back 1BD — drink included. An Indian and Sri Lankan favorite called idli, a savory rice pastry served with curry, will also cost less than 1BD. Some karak tea, a spiced black tea mixed with sweet condensed milk, requires only pocket change to get your caffeine fix early in the morning.

After sunset, the main Qudaihiya Avenue comes alive as diners socialize on sidewalk eateries. The

neon lights of countless shops illuminate the street with most staying open well into the evening.

For dinner, try some Ethiopian injera, a spongy-textured flatbread made of sourdough and served with various curries. A typical spread with drinks can feed a family of four for less than \$20. If the exotic flavors do not excite your taste buds, grab a shawarma with fries and a Coke, also for 1BD.

Qudaihiya, like the main souk just a stone's throw away, is a great place for bargain hunters as well. You can find cellphone repair shops, luggage, textiles, shoes, gold, fresh produce, travel agencies — the list goes on and on.

"I love strolling around this area," said Chief Petty Officer Sabrina Parker, who has lived in Bahrain for three years. "All the same shops and services found in the main souk, just with less tourists."

Parker explained that the prices are less inflated in Qudaihiya because it's a "locals spot," a nice change of pace from the high prices common elsewhere in Bahrain.

A favorite for others is finding a deal on a brand-new hookah pipe, or "shisha," as the locals say. A quality pipe in Qudaihiya starts at 10BD, but haggling might or might not be welcomed depending on the shop owner. If you're not sure, try it. Qudaihiya, as well as many neighborhoods in Bahrain, is home to countless shisha cafes — also known for their delicious fruit juice creations.

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Souvenir shopping in Europe? Lighten up

Shopping in Europe can be fun, but don't let it overwhelm your trip. On one guided tour of the British Houses of Parliament I saw half the group skip out on the tour to survey an enticing array of plastic "bobby" hats, Big Ben briefs and Union Jack panties. Focus on local experiences, and don't let your trip become a glorified shopping spree.

As a fanatic about packing light, I used to wait until the end of my trip to shop, then go hog wild in the last country I visited (and flew home heavy). One summer I traveled with a 16-pound backpack and avoided shopping until the last week of my trip — when, in Spain and Morocco, I managed to accumulate two medieval chairs, two sets of bongos, swords, a mace and a camelhair coat ... most of which are now in my attic.

Now I know better and shop light when it comes to souvenirs. Here are a few ideas for lightweight, packable souvenirs found in some of my favorite places.

Christmas ornaments in Germany: Rothenburg is one of Germany's best shopping towns. Figurines, wine glasses and beer steins are easy to find, but if you want to shop light, consider a Christmas ornament. Rothenburg is the headquarters of the Kathe Wohlfahrt Christmas trinkets empire, which has spread across the half-timbered reaches of Europe. Tourists flock to the two biggest stores, just below Rothenburg's Market Square, where they hungrily fill little woven shopping baskets with goodies to hang on their trees (items handmade in Germany are the most expensive).

Museum gift shops in Amsterdam: Gift shops at major Dutch museums (such as the Rijksmuseum and the Van Gogh Museum) are a bonanza for shoppers. Consider picking up books, postcards, unusual postcards, decorative items or clever knickknacks featuring works by

Rembrandt, Van Gogh or Vermeer. These gift shops are also a good source for books you might not see elsewhere.

Handmade paper in Sweden: The town of Lessebo in the Swedish Glass Country has a 300-year-old paper mill (handpappersbruket) that's well worth a visit.



Rick Steves

a frame, pressed, dried, glazed and hand-torn into the perfect size and shape. This paper has long been coveted throughout Sweden for special purposes, and its excellent gift shop has artisanal watercolor paper, stationery and cards.

Ties in Croatia: Croatian soldiers who fought with the French in the Thirty Years' War had a distinctive way of tying their scarves. The French found the knot stylish, adopted it, and called it a la Croate — or eventually, cravat — thus creating the modern necktie. If you're in the Adriatic port of Split, look for Croatia, a boutique that sells neckties with traditional Croatian motifs, such as the checkerboard pattern from the flag or characters from Croatia's ninth-century Galagitic alphabet.

Lace in Belgium: You can visit high-end stores in Brussels, but Bruges' Kantenstrum (Lace Center) is a museum and school that teaches you about lacemaking while you shop. Exhibits explain the different ways to make lace, and a computer lets you try different techniques yourself



Rick Steves/Ricksteves.com

Handmade lace in Belgium can be pricey, but it's a characteristic, packable souvenir.

— it ain't easy. The payoff is upstairs in the demonstration room, where ladies chat merrily while making lace, usually using the bobbin technique perfected in Bruges. Observe as ladies toss bobbins. They follow mazeltike patterns with a forest of pins to help guide their work. The result is on sale in the gift shop, along with materials for making lace on your own.

Soccer swag in Barcelona: Sports fans love jerseys, scarves and other gear associated with the wildly popular FC Barcelona (aka "Barça") soccer team. You can find knockoffs at tourist shops, but for the real thing, visit Camp Nou Stadium — Europe's biggest, with a capacity of more than 99,000. A tour takes you into through the facility and a museum — and at the end, of course, there's a big shop to buy official Barça gear.

Leather in Florence: Florence's long

leatherworking tradition was born at Santa Croce Church, where Franciscan monks perfected the art of binding gorgeously illustrated manuscripts. Today, the venerable leather school at the church is the city's most famous place to buy leather goods, but you'll see leather for sale all over Florence. A wallet or belt is a nice, packable purchase.

Wherever you go, avoid souvenir carts outside of big monuments, where the goods tend to be overpriced and cheesy. Do your shopping in places that offer a fun cultural experience. If you shop smart and local, a few well-chosen items can help you capture the essence of a place for years to come.

Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

TOP TRAVEL PICKS

Spring volksfests popping up in Germany

They're by no means high-brow, and that's probably what makes them so much fun. Germany's volksfest season is here, and with it comes the opportunity to emerge from winter hibernation to enjoy a day out laced with such classic pastimes as riding on scary-looking attractions, tossing a ring to win a prize, feasting on fries and sausages or other such simple thrills of yesteryear.

Here are some spring fun fairs at which it's possible to relive one's younger years or help future generations make memories of their own.

Speyer: Visit the Fruehjahrs-messe through April 22 to enjoy its rides, plenty of sweet and hearty dishes and games of chance. From 4 p.m.-7 p.m. on Saturdays, kids can meet and greet some of their favorite characters. Fireworks close festivities at 9 p.m. April 22. Online: tinyurl.com/y4c9elly

Frankfurt: The Fruehjahrs-Dippemess takes place from April 12-May 5. This is the Rhine-Main region's big she-bang, with its high-tech rides and prize pavilions among its many draws. Those after tradition will



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do in the Europe Traveler blog: stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler

find 14 stalls selling pottery, which is how the fair got its start back in the 14th century.

Online: dippemess.de
Wuerzburg: The Fruehjahrs-Volksfest takes place on Talavera through April 14. Live boxing takes place in the fest tent on April 7; entry is from 10 a.m. Online: tinyurl.com/y324ez5
Mainz: The Mainzer Rhein-Fruehling runs April 13-28 on the banks of the Rhine. Take in the fireworks on April 13 and 27. Online: tinyurl.com/y495ed4w

Bayreuth: The Fruehlingfest held from April 20-28 offers special days, including a sale of surprise baskets to the first 1,000 comers, the official tapping of

the keg and fireworks on April 20. Live bands will play almost nightly in the "hut." Online: tinyurl.com/y5ubn8bp

Stuttgart: Fruehlingfest, running April 29-May 12, is famous for its rides, games and beer by the liter, drunk in true Oktoberfest style, in big tents to the sound of oompah music. Last year's event attracted 1.6 million visitors. Online: stuttgart-fruehlingfest.de

Paris is for art lovers this weekend

Add an artsy flair to your spring travels by making your way to Paris, where two art shows draw in fans of the bold and beautiful from around the globe.

In the majestic setting of the Grand Palais, Art Paris brings a mix of both modern and contemporary works of art in a range of most years to the French capital. The venue's majestic glass roof will cover 145 art galleries. The international art fair shines a light on European art from the postwar years to the present day, while also probing distant horizons of international creation. Last year's edition featured the work of more than 1,000 artists from 73 countries, with more



Dippemess.de

Frankfurt's Dippemess takes place from April 12-May 5.

than 40% of participants hail from abroad.

The 2019 edition of the fair presents a survey of the work of women artists in France from the postwar period to the present day by highlighting 20 projects and providing additional insight on the works. The present day artistic scenes of Latin America are also featured. A section of the fair titled "Promises" supports young artists and emerging galleries by subsidizing a portion

of their participation costs.

Art Paris runs through April 7. Admission costs 27 euros, while a catalogue goes for an additional 20 euros. Online: artparis.com

The fair known as PAD Paris, held at Les Tuileries, has a different focus, with design, jewelry and primitive arts at its fore.

Adult entry costs 25 euros, while those under 15 enter for free. Students with valid ID pay just 10 euros. Online: pad-fairs.com/paris/en/

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe



PHOTOS BY NANCY MONTGOMERY/Stars and Stripes

Wild boar pizza at Fattore F in Vicenza, Italy, also features mozzarella, kale and sliced almonds. There are 16 gourmet pizzas on the menu, which includes craft beer and a lengthy wine list.

After Hours: Italy

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

Gourmet pizza — a contradiction in terms? Not anymore. And it's gone way beyond chicken and goat cheese.

The newest local addition to the concept is Fattore F, a small pizza place in downtown Vicenza named for its two owners whose last names start with the letter F. According to Google, the name is also short for, in English, the "fertility factor," which allows genes to be transferred from one bacterium carrying the factor to another bacterium lacking the factor by conjugation. Whether the owners know that is unclear.

What is clear is, they know how to make some yummy pizzas. Sixteen types, in fact.

A pizza here isn't merely topped with mozzarella. It's topped with DOP Malga Verde, Asiago cheese from a dairy that "exalts an ancient tradition of protecting the environment, grazing cows and the consumer."

Likewise, Fattore F sells craft beers and also has an impressive wine list.

On a recent visit I went with Il Cinghiale, or the wild boar. Mostly because I liked the faintly ridiculous idea of wild boar from Umbria on pizza. But also because it had sauce from organic San Marzano tomatoes, pan-seared kale, chopped almonds and mozzarella from — well, that translated to "Apulian milk flower of Andria."

In fact, most of the pizza descriptions are several lines long and require some heavy translational lifting. My waiter did speak some English, which was the only reason I knew vaguely what I was getting.



The simple interior of Fattore F restaurant in Vicenza, Italy, reflects its emphasis on natural, locally sourced products.

The pizza was 15 euros, about \$17. It was terrific. The slices of boar were not the tastiest component, as it turned out. The cheese, greens and almonds together were amazing.

The crust was perfect — crunchy on the outside and chewy inside. The waiter told me that had to do with letting the dough rest for 18 hours, then adding the yeast.

Fattore F offers a classic pizza Margherita with tomato sauce, basil and buffalo mozzarella from the Rivianbiana dairy known as "the mozzarella of the angels," for 9 euros.

For most expensive pizza, 23 euros, features burrata cheese from Apulia, and, I kid you not, scallops seared in Trinidadian rum atop a bed of fresh spinach. The restaurant in addition sells

Cooking YouTube channels for all

BY EVERDEEN MASON
The Washington Post

Though I love to eat, it took me a while to start cooking like a person who wants to live

past the age of 50. I literally ate so much boxed macaroni and cheese in my early 20s that I ended up at a doctor for stomach pain, and eliminating fake cheese from my diet immediately cured me. I turned to the internet to figure out how to make a stovetop mac and cheese that did not rely on a powder made of sodium tripolyphosphate and Yellow 6.

Luckily, on YouTube, there are thousands of videos featuring professional chefs, amateur home cooks — sometimes with animal sidekicks — lovingly preparing meals or reveling in food challenges. Below, I've curated a list of videos to inspire every kind of cook.

For the cook who never has

anything in the fridge: Is it just me, or do a lot of food recipes assume that your home is already packed with vegetables, or tools like meat thermometers, or fresh herbs? A person like me is more likely to have four eggs, a potato and microwave popcorn. I started out with a search for recipes with five ingredients or fewer — which I learned are a scam anyway — and ended up on Brothers Green Eats, a popular cooking channel featuring Josh and Mike Greenfield.

The siblings have been recording low-key cooking videos for years in their wonderfully normal kitchen — think a railroad kitchen in a rent-controlled Brooklyn apartment rather than the test kitchens and suburban peacocks to domestic bliss you normally see. They have video challenges where they try to make as many recipes as they can featuring only one ingredient. A lot of this stuff looks questionable — how is it that the deep-fried egg looks both disgusting and delicious? — but the videos are charming and entertaining.

For the cook who often thinks: "Why can't all meals be easy?"

Pasta is my favorite thing to make at home. It gets a bad rap — it's pretty carb-y, and single-serve portions are hard to control (I believe a true one-person serving is approximately half a box of pasta) — but Pasta Grammie reminds us that, prepared lovingly, it exudes flavor, culture and family history.

The host, Vicki Bennisson, travels around Italy to interview and film real-life Italian nonne and home cooks. The show has a lot of the charm and appeal as such educational, high-brow shows as "Chef's Table," but its low-key production and the soothing voice of the narrator (mmmm, toMAHto) make the videos more homey and down to earth. Each video, posted weekly, is two to five

minutes in the kitchen of an adorable Italian senior as she shows you how she makes traditional Italian dishes, like sweet ricotta ravioli.

For the cook who doesn't want to cook; they just want to look at nice food

This is the channel to save for a rough day, when you've worked long hours, and the idea of making anything more complicated than plain pasta with olive oil (and a generous amount of garlic salt and Parmesan cheese, you're welcome) sounds too draining. Jun's Kitchen offers beautiful plating, adorable cats, a scenic view of a foreign country and the soft chills elicited by the weirdly satisfying sound of a knife chopping greens or tempura frying. And if you are an ambitious cook, the descriptions feature ingredients and equipment if you'd like to follow along some day.

For the cook who got called out for being the person in the friend group who never throws a dinner party

It happens to all of us: Someone realizes that you have attended, eaten at and even given feedback on the dinner party that rotate among your friends, but somehow it is never your turn to cook. So now you must devastate them with something delicious, aesthetically pleasing and, most importantly, at your skill level. Binging with Babish provides the perfect inspiration. The channel premiered in 2016 and has nearly 4 million subscribers, and its high production value belies the filmmaker cred of creator Andrew Rea.

The "Weeknight Meals"

video is a personal favorite — everything looks gorgeous and like something a lazy idiot like myself could make. Any of these recipes can be doubled for a larger party, and the meals look impressive enough that you might buy yourself a reprieve for the next couple of rotations and go back to what you (and by you, I mean me) do best: Cracking jokes and making unhelpful food-related observations while definitely not helping with the meal.

For the cook who is refined, but also loves junk food

My favorite series is Gourmet Makes, which won't teach you how to feed yourself but serves as perfect entertainment. In each video, pastry chef and food editor Rebecca Safitz tries to reverse-engineer popular snack foods and candies. Safitz evaluates the texture, shapes, flavors and ingredients before she sets out to make her own version of the thing. Her recent video, appeal as such educational, high-brow shows as "Chef's Table," but its low-key production and the soothing voice of the narrator (mmmm, toMAHto) make the videos more homey and down to earth. Each video, posted weekly, is two to five

But, I admit that I was most charmed by Safitz's rapport with her colleagues. They care about delicious food and root for her even as she destroys kitchen equipment to accomplish her goals.

FATTORE F

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe



The ornate eastern facade of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame

A visual treasure in France REIMS

BY MICHAEL ABRAMS
Stars and Stripes

Reims is in the middle of France's Champagne country.

Many of the bubbly's makers have their headquarters here, and vineyards surround the city.

But Reims is probably best known for its magnificent Cathedral of Notre-Dame.

Built in 1221 to replace an earlier edifice, it features an amazing 2,300 statues of all shapes and sizes, inside and on the outside of its imposing structure.

And despite all the bishops, saints, royals and Jesus Christ, the most popular statue is that of a smiling angel. With its almost Mona Lisa-like smile, it adorns the cathedral's western facade by its main portals.

Sort of hidden away across from it is a statue of Joan of Arc.

She once stood in front of the cathedral, but with a remodeling of the surrounding square, the French heroine was unfortunately banished to the bushes.

There are also other things in

Reims that are worth a look.

The Palais du Tau next door was once the palace of the Archbishop of Reims. Today it is a museum housing the cathedral's treasures.

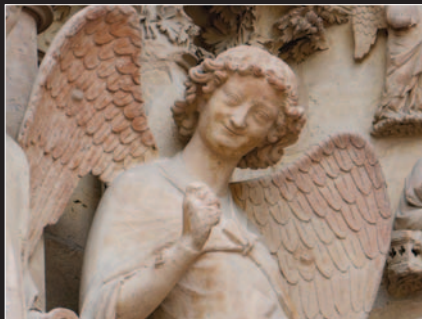
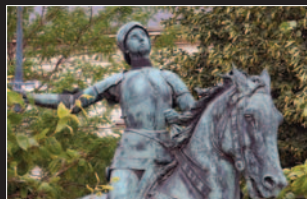
Nearby is the Bibliotheque Carnegie de Reims, an art deco library built from donations by the industrialist Andrew Carnegie after World War I. Besides the building itself, check out its wrought-iron gate and fence.

Much of the old city center has been made into a pedestrian area lined with cafes and restaurants. It's a perfect place for a break.

While strolling around, you'll probably pass the two interesting, but very different, fountains on each end of Place Drouot d'Erion. One looks like a faded water-spouting dandelion, the other is topped by a golden angel.

So, if you are on your way back from Paris, the D-Day beaches or the battlefields and cemeteries of World War I, make a pit stop in Reims for a coffee or a champagne and check out the city's marvels.

abrams.mike@stripes.com



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

The smiling angel is one of 2,300 statues that decorate the Cathedral of Notre-Dame.



From top: The richly adorned Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Reims, France, is decorated with kings, prophets, bishops and saints. A statue of Victory tops the column of the Sube fountain on Place Drouot d'Erion. A statue of Joan of Arc sits across from the Cathedral of Notre-Dame. The beautiful stained-glass rose window above the western portal of the cathedral.

Plane travel must-haves

By CODIE LIERMANN
TravelPulse/TNS

Packing for a vacation can be such an exciting experience — sometimes so exciting we forget to put the essentials in our bag. These things vary for everyone, but here are a few necessities (in no particular order) that I don't leave for the airport without:

Neck pillow

Some people might think carrying a neck pillow is just an extra item to lug around, but for me, it's something I never board a plane without. A comfortable neck pillow can ensure you catch a little shut-eye during a flight without your head bobbing around causing you to wake up with a sore neck.

Whether you're stuck in the middle seat or you're lucky enough to have an aisle or window, a neck pillow makes a world of difference while flying.

Snacks

Snacks are always a good idea no matter what the occasion is. Having a few of your favorite bites while traveling can ensure you don't have hunger. You never know what type of snacks will be passed out on the plane or if you'll have time to grab something before you board.

Try to avoid foods that are messy or ones that can get crushed easily, since you'll most likely be eating them packed in your bag. Also, remember to take them out to be scanned separately when going through security to avoid a full search.

Disinfectant wipes

We all know the number of germs that lurk around on airplanes. Bringing disinfectant wipes can help keep your immune system strong while traveling. Have a small pack handy to give your headrest, armrests and tray table a quick wipe down.

Throwing in a small tube of hand sanitizer is a good idea, too.

Water bottle

In addition to keeping your area sanitized, it's important to stay hydrated during the flight.

I always pack an empty water bottle in my carry-on when traveling on a plane. This way I can fill it up after I go through security as much as I need and sip on it throughout the flight.

Entertainment

Sometimes you get an early-morning or late-evening flight and find yourself snoozing from takeoff to landing. This always makes the time go by quickly. However, for those long flights that pass by at a snail's pace, you need in-flight entertainment to make the time go by.

Certain planes will have a screen for watching movies or playing games, but it's always a good idea to pack a few of your own devices. Laptops, iPads and phones work great for streaming movies and shows. Remember to bring a pair of headphones.

It's also a good idea to choose something non-electronic such as a book, magazine or crossword puzzle in case of technical issues.

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific

Ko Kradan, a remote island in Thailand's Andaman Sea, is home to a handful of small resorts.

PHOTO BY ERIN E. WILLIAMS
For The Washington Post



Dive into Thailand

A top destination for underwater thrill-seekers, Andaman Sea is home to abundant marine life

BY ERIN E. WILLIAMS

Special to The Washington Post

Bobbing in the inky Andaman Sea miles from the Thai shoreline, I watched a crescent moon emerge as twilight deepened. I turned on my flashlight, peered at my husband, Andrew, and made the most appropriate statement for such circumstances:

"Big white rabbits are fluffy."

No bunnies were floating with this ridiculous phrase is a crucial mnemonic for the five steps of a dive buddy safety check.

Satisfied with each other's buoyancy, weight, releases and air, we gave each other the final OK and descended into the void beneath our fins. The moon disappeared, then the lights from the boat faded as we dropped into a world where darkness swallows the coral, fish and sea outside flashlight beams.

The Similan Islands are one of the world's most famous diving destinations. The protected waters, in the Andaman Sea about 40 miles from Thailand's west coast, contain abundant marine life including vibrant reefs and larger pelagic animals that live in the open sea, and we had two days to explore it all.

The overnighter was part of an independent trip to the Andaman, where we used our advanced scuba certification to dive 11 times in three national parks: Mu Ko Lanta, Hat Chao Mai and Mu Ko Similan, the last lying west of resort villages ravaged by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

On a drizzly November morning, Andrew and I departed on a speedboat from a dive shop on Ko Lanta, an Andaman island about 45 miles southeast of Phuket.

Four dive staffers and nine other divers joined us on the hourlong ride to Ko Rok Nok, one of Thailand's top dive sites. The island and its sister isle, Ko Rok Nai, reside within 51-square-mile Mu Ko Lanta National Park. Except for the rangers who

stay on Ko Rok Nai, the two islands are uninhabited.

From the back of the boat, I watched Ko Lanta's jungle-clad hills disappear. Flying fish leaped from our wake and crashed back into the water.

"Don't forget to look into the deep blue," our guide Nok said as we pulled on our wet suits, reminding us to watch for the occasional manta ray and whale shark.

I had last scuba dived more than a year before, so plunging underwater felt a bit unfamiliar. But on our first dive, I lasted about an hour; because of the warm water and gentle current, I didn't consume much air. I lazily drifted past colorful sea slugs clinging to rocks, clownfish nestled in anemones and lionfish patrolling their territories with spikes sticking out like porcupines.

"The water was so clear, I felt like I was flying," Andrew said as we floated.



A captain steers his dive boat away from Kw Woen, an islet in Hat Chao Mai National Park where reef and marine caves lie underwater.

For lunch, we disembarked on a powdery white beach at the narrow channel that runs between Ko Rok Nok and Ko Rok Nai. We ate green curry where hermit crabs left crisscrossed tracks in the sand.

Back under on our second dive, I scanned the open water abutting the reef. A faint shape emerged, growing more distinct as it approached. A sea turtle — one that swam so close that I saw each of the scales on its face. From a coral similar to a barrel sponge, with a three-foot opening, something glared at me indignantly: a



Dive equipment sits ready on a boat in the Similan Islands.

KNOW & GO

Dive and Relax

223 Moo 2, Saladan, Ko Lanta
011-66-84-842-2191

Online: diveandrelax.com

A PADI five-star dive shop offering snorkeling, dive classes and trips with small groups. Two-tank day trips from about \$99 per person, including lunch.

Pro Scuba Diving Service
Sevensae Resort

011-66-81-476-9913

Online: proscubadivingservice.com

Dive shop with two locations offering classes and dive trips. Two-tank day trips from about \$91 per person.

Sunrise Divers

269/24 Patak Rd., Karon Beach, Phuket

011-66-76-398-040

Online: www.sunrise-divers.com

A PADI five-star dive shop offering classes, day and overnight dive trips, and longer liveaboards to the Similan Islands and other destinations. Two-tank day trips from about \$176 per person. Seven-tank overnight trips from \$43 per person, including food.

huge moray curled up like a snake.

Our next Mu Ko Lanta National Park excursion was land-based. Andrew and I rented a motorized scooter to reach park headquarters at the southern tip of Ko Lanta. Leaving behind the controlled street chaos of beachy tourist areas, we puttered along the increasingly jungled roads near the park. Dipping down a precipitous hill, we swerved around monkeys that refused to move from the center of the road.

Thailand has nearly 150 national parks.

In 1990, Mu Ko Lanta National Park became its 62nd. In the park's main headquarters building I browsed educational displays, including a disconcerting collection of plastic garbage that had washed up on beaches. We lounged on a lighthouse-crowned beach, walked a small section of coastal trails that wind through the rainforest and watched monkeys enjoying the view where the jungle met the sea.

Three days later, Andrew and I boarded a speedboat to Ko Kradan, a serene, jungled island that houses a half-dozen small, off-the-grid resorts.

A longtail boat carrying our guide Nok, the captain and three divers from Italy and Germany picked us up from the beach in front of our resort. The group made room for us in the traditional Southeast Asian vessel that resembles a wide gondola with a long, propeller-tipped shaft.

I counted three dozen islands dotting the horizon on our way to Ko Woen, a nearby islet that is part of Hat Chao Mai National Park, which encompasses nearly 90 square miles in Thailand's southwestern corner.

Our longtail boat plowed through the water like a heavy wooden toboggan. During our pre-dive briefing, Nok pointed out a first-aid kit — "in case you get bitten by a shark," he joked — before warning everyone that touching any marine life is dangerous for both divers and the fragile ecosystem.

We stopped under Ko Woen's rocky cliffs that shot straight up from the sea. I sat on the side of the boat and somersaulted backward into the water. There were no sharks, but I found a (nearly) perfectly camouflaged — and highly venomous — pink stonefish resting on the coral.

Back aboard, we ate lunch and took turns cannonballing off the side of the boat.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Pacific

FROM PAGE 32

As I descended for the second dive, supersized schools of fish parted like a river running around rocks. We swam single file through a cave, our flashlights illuminating rocky outcroppings. I squeezed through the exit and looked up along a wall of coral that rose 40 feet to the surface. Animals inhabited every nook and cranny.

The night before departing for our Similan Islands stay, Andrew and I slept in Khao Lak, a coastal resort village about 45 miles north of Phuket.

The next morning, we boarded a motorboat near Khao Lak and rode 90 minutes to Mu Ko Similan National Park, where we transferred to our dive boat, the South Siam 3.

Our boat slept 28 people, but only 12 guests joined the mostly Thai crew. We were seven over-nighters and five day-trippers who would head back to shore after the first two dives. Our day-boat was packed with four dives with our German guide Martina. The following day, we would dive three more times before returning to the mainland.

We entered the water at Ko Bangu (also called Island 9), the main archipelago's northern point.

Garden eels rose like reeds from the sea floor, snapping backward into their burrows as I passed. A foot-long, Technicolor mantis shrimp waved its claws on a coral pinnacle. An octopus changed colors as I approached, perhaps annoyed that its hidey-hole beneath a rock wasn't fooling anybody.

Our night dive began at sunset. Andrew and I completed our safety check and sank 10, 20, 30, 40 feet. Near the bottom, the darkness was total. I swept my flashlight around, illuminating eerie coral and ghostly creatures that stared at me incredulously before darting away.

Huge tuna flashed in and out of my beam. A sleeping boxfish draped like a noodle over a coral branch. A hovering cuttlefish jetted away when I pointed it out to my divemates.

We turned off our flashlights, suspended in complete darkness. I wiggled my hands in front of my face. Tiny silver explosions trailed my fingers: sparkling phytoplankton. I heard a loud grinding as boulders jostled each other in the underwater current.

"Watch for orange reflections," Martina said said during our briefing. I trained my light on the reef. Dozens of lights — eye shine from shrimp and lobsters — winked at me.

Behind my face mask, I winked back.



Amasake-chaya, a teahouse located along Japan's Old Tokaido Road, is housed inside a traditional Japanese-style building, complete with a thatched roof (left). The interior (right) is decorated with ladders and hunting tools used in the Edo Period.



PHOTOS BY HANA KUSUMOTO/Stars and Stripes

After Hours: Japan

BY HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

A sweet, warm, nonalcoholic drink called amasake has refreshed and energized many a hiker who's braved the steep slopes of Japan's Mount Hakone over the past 400 years.

Amasake-chaya, a teahouse and rest house located along the Old Tokaido Road — which once served as the major route between Kyoto and Edo, now modern-day Tokyo — has been serving the same amasake recipe to weary travelers since it opened in the 1600s.

Amasake-chaya is housed inside a traditional Japanese-style building, complete with a thatched roof. Inside, visitors are welcomed by the warmth of an open hearth that fills the room with a pleasant, smoky aroma. The interior is decorated with ladders and hunting tools used in the Edo Period.

Amasake is made by mixing regular and malted rice and heating the mixture for more than six hours. The result is a drink that is naturally sweet, with no added sugar or artificial ingredients.

According to Amasake-chaya owner Satoshi Yamamoto, many people drink amasake to recover after strenuous activity.

"When you are tired, you want something sweet," he said. "It helped customers energize at a time when sugar was valuable."

A cup of Amasake-chaya's famous amasake will set you back 400 yen (or about \$3.60). It's served alongside a selection of salty pickles to enhance the drink's sweetness.

Although amasake can now be purchased everywhere from festivals to convenience stores, the amasake at Amasake-chaya has a gentle sweetness absent in commercially produced versions of the drink.

When asked about the secret ingredient



Amasake is a sweet, warm, nonalcoholic drink made by mixing regular and malted rice and heating it for more than six hours.

of Amasake-chaya's take on this traditional beverage, Yamamoto replied: "When you hike up the steep pass, amasake is much tastier."

Amasake-chaya offers more than its namesake menu item. Hungry visitors can sample a variety of traditional Japanese food items, including chikara mochi (500 yen for two pieces), a type of dessert made from glutinous mochi (or rice) flour. The chikara mochi is offered in three flavors: soy sauce; kinako, or soy bean powder; and kinako mixed with black sesame.

Another item popular in the winter months is miso oden (450 yen), a soup-like dish featuring warm konnyaku, a type of gelatin-like substance made from konjac potatoes, stewed in a simple, hot broth and served with miso.

Other drinks are available, too, including iced green tea (400 yen) and shiso juice (400

AMASAKE-CHAYA

Location: 395-1 Hatajuku Futagoyama, Hakone, Ashigarashimo, Kanagawa 250-0314

Directions: For the easiest access, take the Hakone Tozan bus, which makes regular loops around Hakone, to the Amasake Chaya bus stop.

Hours: Open daily, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Cost: The cafe's famous amasake costs 400 yen (about \$3.60) per cup. Food, including oden (450 yen) is also available.

Dress: Casual

Information: amasake-chaya.jp

— Hana Kusumoto

yen) — a uniquely fragrant Japanese drink made from red shiso, a type of herb, and sugar.

Amasake-chaya is open daily, and Yamamoto said about 7,800 customers visit the rustic cafe during peak hiking season each fall.

This wasn't always the case. Yamamoto said the cafe lost customers when people began traveling by trains during the Meiji Period. World War II also hurt business.

Yamamoto said his grandfather kept Amasake-chaya open when his father was forced to take on other work to earn a living. Customers returned to the area, and the business, once Japan's economy improved in the 1970s.

The original building burned down in 1973, and customers donated money and materials for the one that stands today.

"It is not my store," Yamamoto said. "It is the customers' store."

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL



Soaking in suds

Chicago spa brings European concept stateside — and it's barrels of fun

By JOSH NOEL

Chicago Tribune

You've had beer. Maybe even enjoyed it. But you haven't indulged in beer until you've indulged in beer: a 98-degree bath filled with hops, yeast, herbs and, yes, beer.

The beer soak, as it is called at Chicago's Piva Beer Spa, is a transcendental moment in a day of beer-fueled relaxation. It dazzles every sense: the warmth of the water, the wafting herbal-floral aroma, the cool 16 ounces of Pilsner Urquell sitting at your side, providing a refreshing counterpoint to the soak.

Piva Beer Spa — “piva” means beer in many Slavic languages — offers an array of treatments, from facials to massage to a salt chamber meant to vitalize the respiratory system.

But the highlight is undoubtedly the beer soak. It happens in one of eight larch wood tubs in the basement of the spa that opened late last year in Noble Square. The soak is available for singles and couples in four packages, ranging in price from \$155 to \$550.

Father-and-son founders Edin and Dino Sarancic launched Piva Beer Spa based simply on what they perceived as a hole in the market for a concept not uncommon in Europe.

A handful of American spas claim to do beer treatments, usually invoking beer as an ingredient in a scrub or a facial. Piva is one of the few to go all in, just as you'd find in, say, Prague.

Beer purportedly lends hydration and acts as an antioxidant for skin and hair. But mostly, it's a novel getaway in the middle of Chicago.

The beer soak tubs room at Piva Beer Spa come complete with candlelight, cheese plate and of course — a wooden mug of Pilsner Urquell.

PHOTOS BY ABEL URIBE/TNS



I booked a platinum package at Piva Beer Spa one chilly Monday afternoon. It was supposed to last three hours and 15 minutes but stretched closer to four hours (at no extra charge).

Dino, burly and with a shaved head, greeted me from behind the counter as sounds of plucked acoustic guitar filled the spa. It's not a large space, but enough has been squeezed in for a getaway: a gleaming new steam room, a handsome sauna, a couple of rooms for massage, four soaking rooms (two tubs in each) and small changing rooms.

Sarancic pointed to a sliding wood door. Behind it, he said, I would begin my day in the halotherapy room. He slid the door open to reveal a long narrow room, all white, but tinged violet from lights in the ceiling. A handful of

reclining chairs were lined up on top of a couple inches of salt spread across the floor. A machine on the wall pumped light, salty mist into the air.

Before setting off to the salt chamber for 45 minutes, my busy 21st-century brain defaulted to the obvious question: Should I bring my phone? What will I do for 45 minutes if not checking Twitter?!

I resisted the impulse.

The salt room was warm and comforting and only modestly salty. As I reclined in the violet haze, I closed my eyes and nearly dozed off amid the gentle hum of the salt machine. I didn't miss my phone for a moment.

Next was the steam room for 15 minutes. Then the sauna for another 15. Then the highlight: the beer soak.

Piva Beer Spa doesn't say exactly how

much beer is mixed into the tub — a six-pack? 12-pack? A case? — but Sarancic pegs it as “about 15 to 20 percent” of the warm mixture, which aims to replicate the Czech experience by employing that country's most famous export: Pilsner Urquell.

“It's a fine balance between having the hydrating and antioxidant component, but not enough to make people feel sticky and nasty when they leave here,” Sarancic said.

The soaking tub waited on the spa's lower level, filled with gray-green water where hops floated on the surface.

Beside the tub was a plate with apple slices, two kinds of cheese (asiago and brie), dark rye bread and green olives. A delightful surprise, but most delightful of all was that glass of Pilsner Urquell, in a wood mug imported from Europe.

The 45 minutes ended far too soon.

Next it was back upstairs for the relaxation room and application of a beer mask. The bed, oddly enough, was a wooden slat covered in hay — similar to what you'd find in Eastern Europe, Dino Sarancic said. It was blissfully comfortable — rustic, yet cozy. The spa technician covered my eyes and began dabbing a paste on my face made in the Czech Republic that, sure enough, features beer in the mix. Finally came the full body massage.

After nearly four hours at Piva Beer Spa, I had no idea how much of a difference the beer made in the experience: the soak, the mask, the 16 ounces.

But I left with unmistakable satisfaction — warm, loose and a touch woozy — and quite pleased to be at that warm intersection of deep-muscle relaxation and beer.

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

BY ANERI PATTANI
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Twice a month, half a dozen men gather in Plymouth, Pa., to help each other work through past traumas.

Their chosen method of healing? Cuddles.

It might seem odd, but members of the Men's Therapeutic Cuddle Group say the practice has helped them cope with everything from childhood sexual abuse to the loss of family members when they were young.

The two-year-old group draws men from various backgrounds: a 37-year-old Mormon who works as an airport gate agent, a 57-year-old married father of three, a 62-year-old retiree. There is a range of sexual orientations.

At a time when traditional ideas of manhood are facing scrutiny and such terms as toxic masculinity are becoming more widely known through the #MeToo movement, the group aims to provide new ways for men to express themselves.

"So often, we're taught that to be an emotional stoic is the mark of manhood," said Scott Turner, a 46-year-old interior designer and cofounder of the group. "If you show any emotional weakness or vulnerability, that's a failure to your title of a man."

But "if we expect men to be emotionally sensitive to the needs of others, they first need to be able to build an emotional vocabulary," he said.

Part of that involves learning that physical touch extends beyond aggression or sex. Platonic affection can be a doorway to emotional closeness.

"It's not the ends of what we're doing," Turner said. "It's part of a larger toolbox of healing."

Unlike professional cuddling services, which are gaining popularity in cities across the United States, the group charges no fees and members are not required to undergo training. However, the meetups are not open to the public (members must be interviewed and approved).

A group demonstration

At the beginning of the session, everyone agreed not to engage in sexual touch and to ask for consent before each action. They gathered in a huddle and breathed meditatively.

The cuddling started with men pairing up to do "the motorcycle hold," in which one man sits with his back against another man's chest, as if they were riding together on a motorcycle. Some massaged their partner's shoulders or hands, while others stroked the other person's beard. Many closed their eyes as the room fell into silence. After 15 minutes, they switched to a new partner.

For the second half of the session, the men cuddled as one large group in what they call a "puppy pile." Men lay with their heads in each other's laps, chatted, and joked.

It's meant to be a space where men feel safe sharing their innermost thoughts, said Kevin Eitzenberger, 57, who founded the group with Turner. That can be challenging in other areas of their lives, where they're expected to be "the strong provider."

In the group, "they learn it's OK to be a little fractured," Eitzenberger said.

Importance of vulnerability

As a child, TJ McDonnell was molested by a neighbor. He didn't tell anyone, ashamed he'd done something wrong. For years, he kept his distance from others.

"I never connected with people very well, even my siblings," said McDonnell, now 62.

Getting therapy and attending a support group helped, but McDonnell credits the men's cuddling group for teaching him

Embracing CLOSENESSE

Men's cuddling group aims to heal trauma, redefine masculinity



Tom Gralish/The Philadelphia Inquirer

The Men's Therapeutic Cuddle Group aims to give men a safe space to ask for help or affection. From left, members Kyle Hoffman, Scott Turner, TJ McDonnell, Kevin Eitzenberger and Ryan Hancock pose together in Plymouth, Pa., on March 14.

that emotional intimacy and physical touch aren't always abusive.

"It allowed me to experience what good friendships are, what brothers are," he said.

Another member, Ryan Hancock, has become like a son to McDonnell. Hancock's children even call McDonnell grandpa.

"These types of groups can be healthy and helpful for men and women," said Chris Liang, a licensed psychologist and associate professor of counseling psychology at Lehigh University.

Liang researches the effect of masculinity on health and was part of a board that helped the American Psychological Association (APA) formulate new guidelines on working with boys and men.

The guidelines highlight ways in which traditional views of masculinity — such as, men are tough and never cry — harm their emotional and physical health. Studies show that men who strongly believe in masculine norms are less likely to get preventive health care, more likely to drink heavily and use tobacco, and more likely to hold negative attitudes toward seeking mental-health services.

Many men never learn healthy ways to deal with stress, Liang said. Then, it can emerge in harmful ways.

According to the APA, men commit 90 percent of homicides in the U.S. and represent 77 percent of homicide victims.

They're also more than three times as likely as women to die by suicide, and their life expectancy is nearly five years shorter, largely because of both violence and the health impact of stress.

Liang hopes that such groups as the cuddling meetup can help men move beyond one restrictive definition of masculinity. Although those with more serious concerns may want to seek therapy, he said, "if this is something that's more comfortable for men ... then it can do a whole lot of good."

When Kevin Eitzenberger was 11, his 7-year-old brother died. Growing up, Eitzenberger didn't spend much time with his father. The two had little in common.

Both experiences left Eitzenberger without a role model to show him what it meant to be a man.

"It led me to believe I was less than," he said. "That I wasn't manly."

In 2008, he discovered a group called the ManKind Project (MKP), which would help him overcome that feeling.

Founded about 30 years ago, MKP is a nonprofit focused on building male community through more than 900 men's support groups in dozens of countries.

"We want men to come in and figure out what their ideal of manhood is," said Boyesen Hodgson, communications director of MKP in the U.S.

The group doesn't focus on cuddling,

but it does promote the idea of being open and vulnerable with other men.

"Asking for affection, asking for help, asking for help from other men is scary," Hodgson said. "But it's a very important skill for men to learn."

Studies published in 2010 and 2014 found that participating in MKP programming improved men's psychological well-being for up to two years.

For Eitzenberger, MKP helped him realize that wanting a connection with other men and seeking their acceptance was OK. It led him to start the cuddling group.

A man among men

At the cuddling group demonstration, Ryan Hancock absentmindedly touched TJ McDonnell's ear. Later, McDonnell squeezed in between Turner and Eitzenberger lying on the floor, calling himself "the cream in the cookie."

In this setting, touch was no more notable than asking about someone's day.

Some men teared up as they discussed their regrets as fathers. Others were playful.

At the end of the session, the group huddled and took turns completing the phrase, "As a man among men, I feel ..."

"Grateful to be with all of you," Turner said.

"Worthy of connection," Hancock said. McDonnell, going last, said, "Loved, accepted and included."

WEEKEND: MUSIC



Fresh start

Country duo Maddie & Tae return with new label, new music

By KRISTIN M. HALL
Associated Press

Two years ago, country duo Maddie & Tae were in the studio working what they thought would be their sophomore record on Dot Records. Maddie Marlow and Taylor Dye were both 18 when they signed their record deal and had a successful debut album "Start Here" with a No. 1 platinum debut single "Girl in a Country Song," a roasting of gender stereotypes in contemporary country music. Expectation was high for their follow-up record.

Then they got the call: their label was shutting

down. "We were completely blindsided and just trying to figure out how do we put out music for our fans," said Marlow, now 23. How do we recover from this?"

Now, nearly four years after releasing their first album, the duo is releasing their first EP under their new label, Mercury Nashville. "One Heart to Another," out April 26, will have five songs with a full album coming later this year.

During the time it took to transition to a new label, they decided to focus on writing and going deeper than they were able to get on the first record.

"If it weren't for Dot closing and us having to completely start fresh, we would not have the body

of work that we have now," Marlow said. "So it was a huge blessing in disguise and there's no ill will."

When "Girl in a Country Song" hit in 2014, the airwaves were awash in bro country tropes about women as objects of desire. Marlow, from Sugar Land, Texas, and Dye, from Ada, Okla., were lauded by critics for their beautiful harmonies and songs that earned them comparisons to the Dixie Chicks. Their subsequent singles, "Fly" and "Shut Up and Fish," made the Top 10 and the Top 25, respectively, on the Billboard Country Airplay chart. But they also were conscious that people might pigeonhole them before they even got a chance at a second record.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37

Maddie Marlow, left, and Taylor Dye, of the duo Maddie & Tae, pose in Nashville on March 20. After a successful debut nearly four years ago, the country duo got an unfortunate taste of the music business, which delayed their sophomore album.

MARK HUMPHREY/AP

WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS



Steve Earle

Tom Bezborzowicz
Courtesy of
New West Records

Steve Earle

Guy (New West Records)

Guy Clark was one of Steve Earle's main mentors — Townes Van Zandt, the other — and Earle has honored the brilliant songwriter, who died in 2016, before.

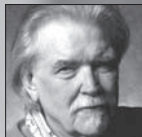
On his previous album, from 2017, Earle wrote a farewell to the master, "Goodbye Michelangelo," and sang "The Last Gunfighter Ballad" on an extended 2011 Clark tribute record that also featured Willie Nelson, Emmylou Harris and Rodney Crowell, among many others.

With the Grammy-winning "Townes" added to Earle's catalog in 2009, it was only a matter of time before "Guy" came along. "When I get to the other side, I didn't want to run into Guy having made the 'Townes' record and not one about him," Earle says, and the Clark songs fit him and his weathered voice like a second skin.

Earle chose nine of the 16 tunes here from Clark's 1975 debut ("Old No. 1") and its 1976 follow-up, "Texas Cookin'," including such classics as "Desperados Waiting for a Train" and "L.A. Freeway," and the performances with The Dukes add some occasional electricity to the originals but don't stray far.

The wattage gets an extra boost on "Out in the Parking Lot," which a late-career Clark co-wrote with Darrell Scott, and the change from Clark's more reflective reading suits it just grand. The touching closer "Old Friends" expands the circle to include vocals from other Clark acolytes like Harris, Crowell, Terry Allen and Jerry Jeff Walker.

From Johnny Cash to Lyle Lovett, Clark's songs have been covered extensively over the years, but the Texan had a knack for recording the definitive versions himself. Still, "Guy" ensures that, whenever Earle's next meeting with Clark may come, Earle has done well by his old friend with this heartfelt tribute, and there'll be no need for reproaches.

— Pablo Gorondi
Associated Press

Guy Clark, who died in 2016, was a mentor to Earle and many other artists.

Strand of Oaks
Eraserland
(Dead Oceans)

The backstory of "Eraserland," the seventh Strand of Oaks album from Philly's Tim Showalter, involves an existential crisis, a songwriting trip to the Jersey Shore, and a call to action from Carl Broemel of My Morning Jacket. The results are excellent. Recorded in Louisville, Ky., with most of MMJ as the backing band, "Eraserland" is somber and rollicking, angry and triumphant, earnest and joyful. Showalter always has been an introspective songwriter, and much of the album finds him thinking about his role as a musician and a music fan.

The album begins in doubt: "I don't feel it anymore," is the opening line of "Weird Ways." But when the band kicks in with a wall of guitars, the doubts are gone. "Eraserland" has some of Showalter's tautest songwriting (the Springsteen-esque "Ruby") but also a pensive nine-minute ballad ("Forever Chords," with Neil Young echoes) and psychedelic freakouts ("Moon Landing," with Jason Isbell on wild guitar). "I gotta get my s--- together before I'm 40," Showalter, who's in his late 30s, pleads on "Keys." Mission accomplished, musically at least.

— Steve Kline
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Jenny Lewis

On the Line
(Warner Bros.)

Jenny Lewis has had a rough few years leading up to her new solo album, "On the Line." Her mother died of cancer. Her 12-year relationship with singer-songwriter Johnathan Rice ended. But these songs aren't about falling apart. They are about putting things back together. "Can you be my puzzle piece, baby, when I cry like Meryl Streep?" she asks in the lovely, melancholy "Party Clown," which has vocals reminiscent of her breakout album, "Rabbit Fur Coat," but maintains the mix of '70s rock and hip-hopting rhythms of her more recent work. "When I crack my head open, I want my baby next to me."

Lewis always has been a meticulous, detailed writer, on her own or in her former band, Rilo Kiley. However, the combination of her circumstances and the ambitious mix of musical styles behind her lyrics here makes her songs more poignant than ever. The girl-group simplicity of the "On the Line" title track tries to mask the complicated calculations of a narrator trying to keep her boyfriend from straying. But it also captures the album's main theme — that it will be fine either way.

— Glenn Gamboa
Newsday

FROM PAGE 36

"A lot of people named it novelty or a one-hit wonder," said Dye, also 23. "But we just knew that was just a side of us that we were going to show first and there was going to be multiple sides to follow after that. So we never really let it get to us in a standpoint of making us doubt who we are and what we do."

Considering they wrote their first album when they weren't even of drinking age, the new music shows a more sophisticated side, a maturity reached from having setbacks and the realization that they're just going to have to work harder because they are women in a male-dominated industry. There's more than one breakup song on the EP, which is a bit of a reflection of how they felt after

Dot closed. The title track "One Heart To Another" shows the vulnerability in getting dumped by a serial heartbreaker, but without any anger or jealousy toward the other woman.

"We went to the writing session and we just said, 'OK, you know what? Industry aside, radio aside, everything else aside, what do we want to say?'" Dye said. "Do we want to be bolder? What do we want this next record, this next phase of us, to look like? And are we going to be scared and shy away from things that we've never talked about, or should we just go for it? And we went for it."

While they've been addressing the gender disparity issues in country music since the beginning of their careers, the problem has only gotten worse since "Girl in a Country Song." In December, there

were weeks where no women were in the top 20 of Billboard's Country Airplay chart for the first time since its launch in 1990.

Maddie & Tae have released three songs from their forthcoming album already, but only one has made it to the Top 35 of the country airplay chart. They've had more success outside of the FM dial, with satellite radio embracing "Die From a Broken Heart," and they've also included on two of Spotify's country playlists. Additionally they are opening for Carrie Underwood on her arena tour that starts this May.

JR Schumann, SiriusXM's senior director of country music programming, said he immediately latched onto "Die From a Broken Heart" and started putting it in heavy rotation on their channel "The

Highway."

"It connects on a personal and emotional level that I haven't seen in a long time," Schumann said. "Every time we played it, especially early on as people were discovering it, our social media platforms would literally light up."

But they haven't completely abandoned the wit and sass that drew everyone to them in the first place. "New Dog, Old Tricks" is a takedown of those lame pickup artists who think they've got just the right lines to woo a woman. Written by Emily Wiseman, Jesse Frasure and Laura Veltz, they're wanted to record it for years because Marlow said it felt "bassy."

"This is so on brand for us, and this is part of our message, empowering women," said Marlow. "Just reminding people who runs the world, you know?"

WEEKEND: BOOKS



Author Julie Langsdorf started writing "White Elephant" nearly 15 years ago. The book, in which she satirizes suburban life, was released March 26.

Courtesy of Robin B. Langsdorf

Writer's satire draws on her years living in the suburbs

By BETHANNE PATRICK
Special to The Washington Post

Julie Langsdorf always saw herself as a writer. Even during the years when she was a stay-at-home mom in Potomac, Md. She might not have had success publishing her work, but writing was a part of her identity, so she kept at it.

"That's what I did in the time that was my own," she says. "I wrote."

Now, at 55, with her two children grown, her debut novel "White Elephant" has finally reached the masses, propelled by positive early reviews and a hefty first run.



Coincidence or not, Langsdorf's success comes after leaving her longtime suburban existence. Following her 2012 divorce, Langsdorf moved to Washington, D.C., and devoted herself to writing while teaching yoga on the side. And yet, the book takes her back to that former life: "White Elephant" seems to channel all of the frustrations she felt juggling her

identities as a mother and creator in a stifling suburb. The novel follows the residents of the fictional enclave of Willard Park — inspired, in part, by Langsdorf's hometown of Kensington, Md. — where an interloper's plans to build a McMansion amid the cozy bungalows leads to angry men, scandalous romantic dalliances and shady high jinks.

Like Langsdorf, two of the main characters in her ensemble are mothers grappling with their identities beyond being wives and mothers. Allison Miller, who has lived (mostly) happily in Willard Park for more than a decade, wonders what to do with her photography — more than a hobby, less than a career. Her new next-door neighbor, Kaye Cox, can't figure out who to be, caught between her role as a fixture in her husband's behemoth of a house and her own interest in interior decoration. These women and their author are well acquainted with the eternal dilemma for parents, pulled between caregiving duties and other interests, professional and personal.

But with her children launched, Langsdorf

had more time to focus on her own more-than-a-hobby. Not that the path to success was immediate.

"In the couple of years before the book came out, I stopped calling myself a writer and just called myself a yoga teacher," she says. "I'd been writing for so long without success that I was embarrassed."

But all of those years in the suburbs — which was "not the best place for me," she admits — offered plenty of material. "A lot of people live in the suburbs because it's an easy place to live and feel safe," she says, but we all know idyllic exteriors can be deceiving.

Willard Park sees uprooted trees, mysterious fires, angry altercations, and it's all smart, satiric fun, the kind of comic novel that helps us see our own foibles while we're laughing at those of others.

Langsdorf says earlier novels ("which are in various drawers") were great practice for her, but she couldn't have written this one until she had enough time and space. She started a draft of it in 2005, finishing a few years later.

"It didn't sell at that time, and I thought the time for this book had come and gone," she says. "When I picked it up again in 2017, we were in a very different era and these houses were all over the place."

The story does feel perfectly timed, not just in terms of real estate booms, but in the way warning factions sprout up and become stubbornly entrenched. And yet, the comedy of it all softens the ominous undertones.

"We're at a dark and contentious time in our country," says Megan Lynch, Langsdorf's editor at Ecco, "and we need things that help us escape ... which, at the same time, aren't pure escapism."

Almost every neighborhood in the D.C. region has experienced a version of the changes in "White Elephant." Langsdorf laughs about some of the struggles she's seen in her own building, hastening to add that her fellow co-op residents are all great neighbors.

The residents of Willard Park come to realize that houses matter less than their inhabitants — and that the suburbs aren't for everyone. Langsdorf understands this, too, in her current existence: she feels more herself. "My life is much more vibrant," she says. "I love being able to walk everywhere, and I do have more time to write."

April reads: 9 books to look for this month

By BETHANNE PATRICK

Special to The Washington Post

Whether you have eclectic tastes or are in search of something specific — a mystery, a juicy novel, a big fat tome — this month's must-read list has something for you. Everyone wins in April. No fooling.

"Maybe You Should Talk to Someone: A Therapist, Her Therapist, and Our Lives Revealed"

Lori Gottlieb (April 2)

No wonder Gottlieb is already adapting this book for television with Eva Longoria and ABC. Who could resist watching a therapist grapple with the same questions her patients have been asking her for years? Gottlieb, who writes the Atlantic's "Dear Therapist" column, brings searing honesty to her search for answers.

"Greek to Me: Adventures of the Comma Queen"

Mary Norris (April 2)



If you haven't read "Between You & Me," Norris' ode to good grammar, buy it together with her new book, and you'll have at least two days of

reading. A New York Times copy editor, Norris this time delivers an appreciation of Greece, plus a look at how that country's language influenced ours.

"The Affairs of the Falcons"

Melissa Rivero (April 2)

Some novels about immigrants and immigration focus on the "Wow! America!" factor. However, debut novelist Rivero goes deeper, showing the price her main characters, Ana and Lucho, have paid in leaving Peru to make a new life. It's a beautiful, serious and life-affirming book.

"Naamah"

Sarah Blake (April 9)

Imagine you're married to Noah, and God tells him to build an ark to survive a coming flood. What the wha? Naamah doesn't share her husband's faith, but she does have fierce, deep love for their children and wants them to survive. The book is a testament to the idea that more than one sex, more than one idea and more than one individual makes the world in all its glory and tragedy.

"Falter: Has the Human Game Begun to Play Itself Out?"

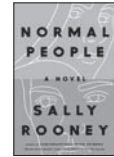
Bill McKibben (April 16)

McKibben wrote "The End of Nature" 30 years ago, an early warning about climate change, and his new book is another sobering call to arms. McKibben, whose 350.org aims to demonstrate what people around the world can do to protect Earth, reminds us that as we drain critical resources, we're also moving toward draining our own ties to

the planet and to each other. Is there hope? Yes. Well, maybe. If we pay attention.

"Normal People"

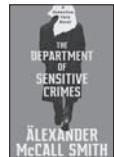
Sally Rooney (April 16)



The Irish writer's 2017 "Conversations With Friends" won over American readers with its deadpan wit, following a young woman's attempt to create an artistic life. "Normal People" is another familiar plot — two young lovers meet in high school, diverge at university, meet again as young adults — but Connell and Marianne are fresh, their entanglement so achingly tender that you'll read till the last drop of tea is poured.

"The Department of Sensitive Crimes: A Detective Varg Novel"

Alexander McCall Smith (April 16)



The celebrated Scottish storyteller has turned his pen to Scandicville, setting his latest series with Detective Ulf "The Wolf" Varg heading up a department of singular characters in the Swedish city of Malmö. It's as if Fox Mulder, Lisbeth Salander's maiden aunt and Kurt Wallander collaborated on a new unit, and it's great fun.

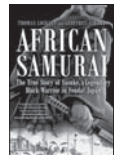
"Why You Like It: The Science and Culture of Musical Taste"

Nolan Gasser (April 30)

Gasser is chief architect of Pandora Radio's Music Genome Project, so he deeply understands why you like what you like. And he's written one of those rare books that both geeks and casual listeners can enjoy, combining science, art and sheer enthusiasm to explain why you might love bluegrass while your significant other prefers the blues.

"African Samurai: The True Story of Yasuke, a Legendary Black Warrior in Feudal Japan"

Thomas Lockley and Geoffrey Girard (April 30)



In the late 1500s, an African man arrived in Kyoto. Lord Nobunaga, head of Japan's most powerful clan, appointed him a samurai, naming him Yasuke. The authors, an academic (Lockley) and a novelist (Girard), don't have a lot of source material, but they've written a readable, compassionate account of an extraordinary life.

WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

“Vice”: The idea of making a film based on the life of former Vice President Dick Cheney resonates with all the excitement of a documentary on the history of paint drying. But director/writer Adam McKay’s latest work, “Vice,” ignores the potentially boring elements to examine the rise of Cheney (Christian Bale) from a political second banana to a man so in love with power he convinces George W. Bush (Sam Rockwell) to give him more authority than any Veep has known.

It’s as if McKay took the silliness of politics he embraced with his story for the 2012 Will Ferrell comedy “The Campaign” and used the explanatory structure of his 2015 film “The Big Short.” McKay manages to make the story of Cheney, who served four Republican presidents, a slightly interesting look at the complicated world of politics, the obsessive need for power and the Shakespearean relationship between Cheney and his wife, Lynne (Amy Adams).



Annapurna Pictures

Christian Bale, left, stars as Dick Cheney and Amy Adams, right, is Lynne Cheney in “Vice,” now available on DVD.

“Nancy Drew and the Hidden Staircase”: Sophia Lillis has stepped into the gumshoe’s shoes. Best known for her work in “It,” the actress stars in the film, based on the second book in the mystery series. Following the death of his wife, Carson Drew (Sam Trammell) moves with his daughter, Nancy (Lillis), from Chicago to a peaceful existence in the small city of River Heights.

What makes this Nancy different is there seems to be a little more of a tomboy element. Nancy is 16 but doesn’t have her driver’s license, and her chief method of travel is a skateboard. She does a mind bending the law if it helps her quest for the truth.

Even with some major miscues, “Nancy Drew and the Hidden Staircase” works well for its target audience.

“Bumblebee”: This lighter “Transformers” story starts when Cybertron falls. Optimus Prime sends Bumblebee to Earth to be a protector of the planet. He gets some unexpected help from Charlie Watson (Hailee Steinfeld), a spunky teenager who like Bumblebee is trying to find her place in the world.

The film eventually gets around to some big battle moments, but a large part of the movie is a weird version of a boy and his dog format. It doesn’t have the punch of a production with multiple “Transformers” in the mix, but it is a sweet story that puts all the pieces together well enough to be entertaining.

Also available on DVD:

“The Man Who Killed Hitler and Then The Bigfoot”: American legend (Sam Elliott) is called on to go on one more mission.

“The Mule”: Clint Eastwood plays a man in his 80s who becomes a drug runner.

“No Alternative”: Teen drama that looks at the world of suburban American teenagers in the early ‘90s set against grunge and punk rock music.

“Nazi Junkies”: Documentary looks at how Adolph Hitler and Nazi Germany were heavily addicted to drugs.

“Seven in Heaven”: A simple game leaves a pair in an alternate reality.

—Rick Bentley/Tribune News Service

Centineo, front and center

Teen achieves heartthrob status in trio of Netflix films

By SONIA RAO

The Washington Post

Decades ago, Hollywood determined that the ideal teen heartthrob should be tall, dark and handsome. He should be around 6 feet tall, give or take a couple of inches. He should have dark hair, preferably of the floppy variety. His smile—or smirk, depending on the scene—should make young audiences swoon and hope that someone like him asks them to prom in the spring. Think Jake Ryan of “Sixteen Candles,” Patrick Verona of “10 Things I Hate About You” or even Michael Moscovitz of “The Princess Diaries.”

Last summer, Netflix added another name to the mix with Peter Kavinsky of “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before.” As if grown in a lab for this very purpose, actor Noah Centineo embodies all the aforementioned positive traits, and then some.

Viewers couldn’t help but fall for his kind and vulnerable character, who gave off extreme Mark Ruffalo vibes that Centineo also wielded to book two other Netflix projects: “Sierra Burgess Is a Loser,” released last fall, and “The Perfect Date,” whose trailer dropped last week.

The streamer has found the perfect teen heartthrob, and they’re never looking back. Can you blame them? Though we may never have the numbers to back this up (le sigh), Centineo seems to excel at attracting young audiences to Netflix. And with “Riverdale” royalty Camila Mendes and Disney Channel alumna Laura Marano by his side, “The Perfect Date” is likely to perpetuate that streak.

This time around, Centineo plays Brooks Rattigan, a high schooler who by his own admission has “always wanted to date the most popular girl, drive the nicest car and go to the fanciest school.” This means he has always wanted to date the beautiful Shelby Pace (Mendes), drive a cerulean BMW and attend Yale University. But he can’t afford any of these dreams, so he decides to create an app where rich kids can pay him to pretend to be their boyfriend for any situation that calls for a fake boyfriend.

Naturally, the first girl who takes him up on his offer, fellow semifinal attendee Celia Lieberman (Marano), develops a crush on him. But over time, the money turns him into a negligent friend and light narcissist worthy of the name Brooks Rattigan. Yikes!

Centineo has duped before, of course, as “To All the Boys” follows Peter and classmate Lara Jean Covey (Lana Condor) as they pretend to date so her older sister’s ex-boyfriend doesn’t discover Lara’s massive crush on him, and so Peter can try to make his ex-girlfriend jealous. (They fall in love instead.) Centineo has also been duped, as “Sierra Burgess” centers on an unpopular girl (Shannon Purser) who catfishes a kindhearted jock (Centineo) by pretending to be a cheerleader online. (They also fall in love instead.)

In all movies, Centineo comes across as someone you can trust. His mature, respectful characters are the love interests whom past movie teens deserved

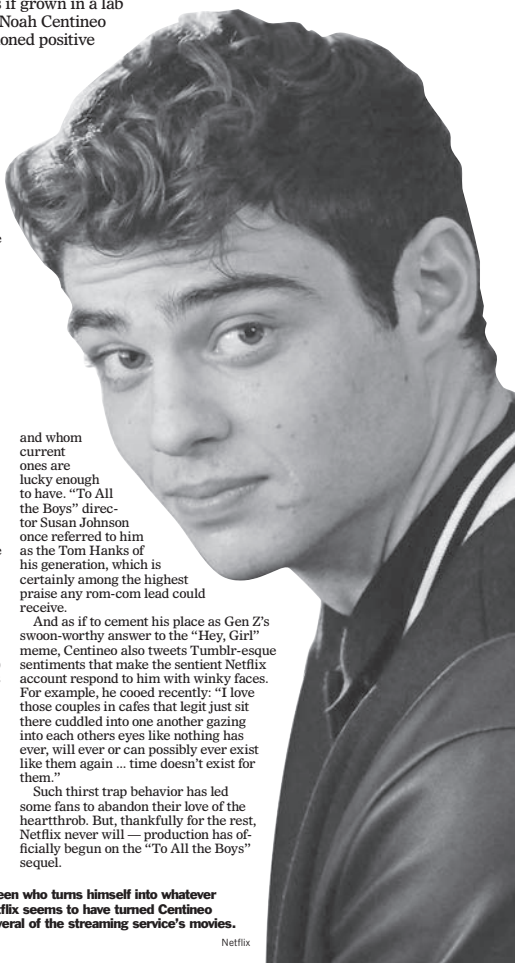
and whom current ones are lucky enough to have. “To All the Boys” director Susan Johnson once referred to him as the Tom Hanks of his generation, which is certainly among the highest praise any rom-com lead could receive.

And as if to cement his place as Gen Z’s swoon-worthy answer to the “Hey, Girl” meme, Centineo also tweets Tumblr-esque sentiments that make the sentient Netflix account respond to him with wink faces. For example, he cooed recently: “I love those couples in cafes that legit just sit there cuddled into one another gazing into each others eyes like nothing has ever, will ever or can possibly ever exist like them again ... time doesn’t exist for them.”

Such thirst trap behavior has led some fans to abandon their love of the heartthrob. But, thankfully for the rest, Netflix never will—production has officially begun on the “To All the Boys” sequel.

Noah Centineo plays Brooks Rattigan, a teen who turns himself into whatever teen girls want in “The Perfect Date.” Netflix seems to have turned Centineo into whatever teen girls want to see in several of the streaming service’s movies.

Netflix



WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

JUST A NUMBER?

Why chronological age tells your doctor only so much about your health

By GABRIELLA BOSTON
Special to The Washington Post

“You look young for your age.” Aside from being flattering, the sentence also highlights the fact that we can inhabit two ages at once: chronological age and biological age. Chronological age dictates the number of birthday candles we

‘Many of the things that we consider age-related changes are more related to activity or inactivity as opposed to age.’

Todd Miller
associate professor,
George Washington
University

To put it another way: Chronological age has very little to do with our actual physical well-being.

For example, a 50-year-old smoker can have the lung capacity of an 80-year-old,

says Todd Miller, associate professor in exercise and nutrition sciences at George Washington University. “In other words, the 50-year-old smoker has the ‘lung age’ of an 80-year-old,” Miller says.

But it’s not just active misuse of the body — such as smoking — that ages us beyond our chronological age. It’s also — perhaps even more commonly — inactivity, says Miller, whose lab measures health and performance-related markers such as bone density, body composition and max oxygen uptake. “Many of the things that we consider age-related changes are more related to activity or inactivity as opposed to age,” Miller says. For example, “weight gain is not obligatory with age.”

If age holds only so much of our fate in its grip, that gives us more reason to incorporate healthy habits into our routines. Although age-related changes are inevitable, they “can be mitigated by sleep, exercise, nutrition and stress reduction,” Miller says. Exactly how much can be mitigated bodywide, he says, is unclear. But in terms of specific markers — such as lung capacity — our habits (healthy or not) can change our biological age by several decades.

Just to be clear, biological age is as much about feel and function as it is about looks. “How we function on a daily basis is what matters the most,” says Archibald-Pannone, referring to her (chronologically) aging patient population.

Elizabeth Brooks, a Washington-based personal trainer, says wellness (good rest, nutrition, community, fitness) makes her feel much younger than her 51 years. Many people assume it’s in her genes to look young and be in shape. Brooks was once overweight, something that runs in her family. “It’s that concept of nature and

nurture,” she says. “The majority of who we are is nurture.”

Eyleen O’Rourke, a professor of biology and cell biology at the University of Virginia, agrees. “Lifestyle matters a lot for aging,” O’Rourke says. “DNA damage caused by things like smoking and metabolic syndrome accelerate what we think of as age-related illnesses,” she says. Metabolic syndrome is a cluster of conditions such as high blood sugar, high blood pressure and extra body fat around the stomach. It is known to increase risk for conditions such as stroke, diabetes, heart disease and cancer — though the mechanism is not yet understood. Although we might not know why metabolic syndrome is associated with higher rates of cancer, “we do know that excess fat reduces the natural rejuvenation of cells,” O’Rourke says.

And there is the crux. The ability of cells to rejuvenate, to respond to damage, is what keeps us “young.” Good genes help, but good habits help more. “Your genome isn’t deterministic. It doesn’t have strong predictive power by itself,” O’Rourke says. “Everything is context. And there is hope for everyone.”

The earlier we start, the better it is. Bone growth is at its prime in childhood and adolescence; and those who train and eat healthily throughout their lives will be stronger at age 70 or 80 than those who take up the healthy habits later. That said, “there is no too old” to start, Miller says. “Muscle responds at any age. You can get positive results even if you start lifting weights at age 80.”

QUICK HITS

Potential drug for muscular dystrophy shows promise in mice

By MARCIA HEROUX POUNDS
Sun Sentinel

Researchers in Florida never expected this much success with a drug they’re developing to treat muscular dystrophy.

The results look better than we could have imagined,” said Matthew Disney, the Scripps Florida scientist leading the research.

The potential drug improved muscle defects with no apparent side effects in tests using mice, Scripps researchers say. Human trials still have to be conducted.

The research targets the most common form of muscular dystrophy in adults, myotonic dystrophy type 1, which is estimated to affect around 1 in 8,000 people, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Doctors often misdiagnose the disease, meaning more people could actually be affected, said Molly White, CEO of the San Francisco-based Myotonic Dystrophy Foundation.

Genetic studies suggest the actual numbers are more than three times higher, around 1 in 2,500, she said.

Symptoms of the inherited disease emerge in late teens or early adulthood. They include muscle clenching lock-jaw, early-onset cataracts, brain fog, muscle wasting and weakness, digestive difficulties and sudden cardiac death, White said.

In 2018, Disney’s drug development company Expansion Therapeutics became Scripps Florida’s largest spinoff since the institute was founded in 2014. Expansion Therapeutics, which is developing drugs that target muscular dystrophy, operates out of wet labs at Florida Atlantic University adjacent to Scripps Florida in Jupiter, as well as San Diego.

In 2015, Disney was a recipient of the “Pioneer Award” from the National Institute of Health, for scientists developing groundbreaking approaches.

In February, Disney and his research team announced the development of a compound that could help make breast cancer patients more receptive to treatment.

Scripps Florida opened in Jupiter in 2009, part of an effort to generate higher-paying science and technology jobs in Florida. Palm Beach County and the state invested more than \$600 million in taxpayer-backed incentives to bring the research institute to the area.

ILLUSTRATION BY
NOGA ARN-NAV
Stars and Stripes



WEEKEND: FAMILY



ILLUSTRATION BY BEV SCHILLING/Stars and Stripes

That new-mom glow

Some feel pressure to pull off postpartum perfection

By LEANNE ITALIE
Associated Press

As Danielle Bayard Jackson was putting together her birthing team, she made sure to include a doula, all the details she wanted taken care of during delivery and how bright the lights should be for ambience.

She passed on the makeup artist. “I even looked up various prices, but something about that felt frivolous,” said Jackson, in Tampa, Fla. “I decided I didn’t want to worry about that after such a monumental moment.”

Therein lies the debate centered on pregnant women in today’s social-media-saturated world: to glam or not to glam soon after a whole human being exits your body, or do as Seattle-area mom Robin Rucinsky did (by the time baby No. 4 rolled around: “I didn’t pack a single cosmetic. I brought a toothbrush and chapstick.”)

With the Kate Middleton postpartum hair blowout (three times!) fresh in our minds and another royal birth upcoming, the debate over perfection hours after giving birth looms large for some women.

“I’ll tell you who it’s not fun to be pregnant at the same as. Meghan Markle,” Amy Schumer, suffering from chronic nausea throughout her pregnancy, cracked during her new Netflix comedy special. “She’s out there in, like, 6-inch heels, adorable outfits.”

While we won’t know whether Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, will follow in the footsteps of Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, when it comes to postpartum perfection, we have an inkling Meghan will at least slap on some makeup as she introduces the latest royal to the world, probably this month.

And when she does, anti-glam-mers will take notice.

“I think that a mother who has just given birth is beautiful — with disheveled hair, with smeared or no makeup, with top wide open for skin-to-skin contact and breastfeeding,” said Kirsten Brunner, a perinatal counselor in Austin, Texas. “I love the trend in birth photography

‘These days, Instagram is split into two kinds of moms. The ones who want to show the absolute raw, very personal, private things and the rest who want to pretend they’re models in a staged photoshoot.’

Jill Simonian
author

of capturing the reality of childbirth and the postpartum experience. I encourage my clients to let go of all pressure to get back to normal as soon as possible.”

But, no judgments of those who choose to spruce up. With some hospitals providing in-house spa services and plenty of women hiring specialists for hair, makeup and nails, the argument over what makes a postpartum mom feel best cuts both ways.

For Julien Farel’s wife, it meant pulling her look together to greet visitors — including her Old World British grandmother — after the arrivals of their two children.

Farel owns the Julien Farel Restore Salon and Spa inside the Loews Regency Hotel on New York’s swanky Park Avenue. He’s

been providing and arranging for in-hospital services for women giving birth since 2001, with prices now ranging from \$320 for a blow-out, makeup or manicure to \$2,000 an hour for all three at the highest level of design and expertise.

“Mostly they’re looking for those three things: makeup, nails and blow dry,” he said. “These people care so much about their appearance. You have other people with much more money who don’t care. It’s about how you’ve been raised to look when you have people over.”

Farel has between 10 and 15 in-hospital pregnancy clients a month among his usual customers. Still, the hashtag “takeback-postpartum” is alive and well on Instagram.

“Women are more confidently owning their bodies, not feeling obliged to always look good and social media really after giving birth,” said Marianne Ryan, a New York physical therapist who focuses on pregnant and post-baby bodies.

Jill Simonian, who — ironically — wrote a book titled “The FAB Mom’s Guide: How to Get Over the Bump & Bounce Back Fast After Baby,” said all the social-media-fueled doubt among new mothers isn’t good for mom or baby.

“If you want a blowout to make yourself feel better a few days after having a baby, go for it! It’s the constant posting, showing, sharing that drives me absolutely nuts and indicates a sure-fire, unhealthy start to new motherhood,” she said.

Simonian supports a 30-day hiatus from glam after giving birth.

“These days, Instagram is split into two kinds of moms,” she said. “The ones who want to show the absolute raw, very personal, private things and the rest who want to pretend they’re models in a staged photoshoot.”

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Boarding schools can work for military brats

April, the Month of the Military Child, reminds me of both challenges and opportunities faced by my own military children.

“Annabana, knock ‘em dead,” I said when I dropped my daughter off for her first day of 10th grade after we moved to Rhode Island. A typical Navy brat, Anna knew all about being the new kid, but this school was different. Very different.

Eight months prior, my husband, Francis, had received orders to Naval Station Newport. We visited the city to house hunt and investigate the public schools for our three children. Newport’s schools were disappointing, and we weren’t sure what to do. While exploring, we drove past an old stone wall emblazoned with a “St. George’s School” crest. A tree-lined road led to a stately building with two red doors.

“Wow,” I told Francis, “Is that one of those old boarding schools? Like in the movies?” Later in our base hotel room, Google confirmed that it was. The tuition was astronomical — impossible for us. But the admissions website encouraged “families of all economic levels” to inquire about financial aid.

“I’m sending them an email,” I told Francis.

“You’re wasting your time,” he replied, laughing.

The next morning, the Admissions Director called. He told us of their military scholarship program and offered to show us around. We met him at the red doors, and, with mouths agape, toured the stunning campus.

Eight months later, Anna arrived. She opted to be a day student, knowing she’d become a boarder if we got orders to move before her graduation.

Anna blossomed at St. George’s, which embraced her interest in fashion design as an academic pursuit, not as a hobby as others had. They gave her a fashion column in the school newspaper, allowed her to create garments in advanced art classes, entered her designs in contests and established a new position for her as costume designer for the musical productions. Anna completed a semester at sea aboard the school’s sailboat, where she earned science credits while traveling to other countries and tagging sea turtles. Most importantly, the school showed genuine respect for military families like ours.

Anna is now a fashion design student at Syracuse University. Her extraordinary high school experience undoubtedly contributed to her positive outcome.

Francis and I learned that boarding schools are not stodgy institutions where wealthy kids are shaded by neglectful parents. They are supportive educational environments that offer unique opportunities in ideal settings. In fact, according to a recent study, 78 percent of boarding students reported feeling prepared for college, compared to 23 percent of public school students. Ninety percent of boarding school students feel they have high-quality teachers compared to 51 percent of public school students. Only 50 percent of students find public school academically challenging, compared to 91 percent of boarding school students.

Furthermore, moving is harder on adolescents, who not only experience academic and athletic setbacks, but they are more likely to have negative psychological consequences. The chance for a four-year, uninterrupted educational experience makes boarding school a good option for military families whose children don’t want to endure the trauma of moving during high school.

It is possible for military families to afford boarding schools, but not without need-based grants, merit-based scholarships or financial aid. Although St. George’s was the first boarding school to offer a military scholarship, a new nonprofit, The Orion Military Scholarship Fund, Inc. (OrionMilitary.org) is in its early funding phase. Orion plans to begin offering merit scholarships to qualified active-duty military students to attend a variety of participating U.S. boarding schools beginning in 2020.

While every military child deserves an education, those willing to explore unique alternatives could find extraordinary opportunities.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari’s columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com

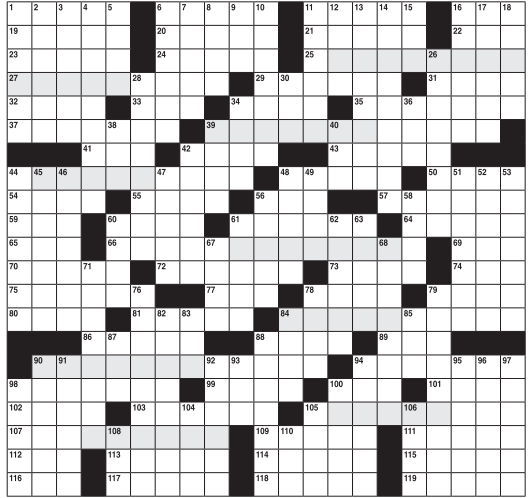
WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

TAKE ONE FOR THE TEAM BY ANDREW J. RIES / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

This crossword by Andrew J. Ries, of La Pine, Ore., comes with special instructions: Drop one letter from each set of shaded letters in the grid to name a major-league baseball team. The letters thus removed, in order from top to bottom, will spell an appropriate answer at 76-Down. Andrew is a lifelong baseball fan — his favorite teams are hidden in 90s- and 107s-Across. He's excited about the new season, which has just started. —W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Top 10-rated sitcom each season from 1972 to 1976
- 6 Chilling
- 11 Payment vouchers
- 16 Dugout propeller
- 19 Mexico City daily
- 20 Dish of cooked buckwheat
- 21 Site of a 2019 Trump/Kim meeting
- 22 ____ hug
- 23 Moved stealthily, colloquially
- 24 Not a nice look
- 25 Pronounces breathily
- 27 Hearty pasta topping
- 29 Absolute truth
- 31 A singer can carry one
- 32 Some plumbing joints
- 33 Ask too-personal questions
- 34 Tailor's tool
- 35 Uses as a perch
- 37 Mold into something new
- 39 Historic San Francisco thoroughfare
- 41 ____ y Plata (Montana's motto)
- 42 Aid in tapestry-making
- 43 Itinerant sorts
- 44 Outfits in the operating room
- 48 Stockholm stock unit
- 50 "Look at me — I did it!"
- 54 Precisely
- 55 Saint in a children's rhyme
- 56 ____ Maria (coffee liqueur)
- 57 Sister in a children's story
- 59 Small pain
- 60 Upright building support
- 61 Travel group
- 64 Big name in 1950s politics
- 65 "Flowers" and "Sticky Fingers" for the Stones
- 66 Some Sunday broadcasting
- 69 Cakes and ____ (simple material pleasures)
- 70 Buncha
- 72 Hockey venues
- 73 Wonka portrayer
- 74 Rock band with the 1994 4x platinum album "The Downward Spiral," for short
- 75 Many Jazz fans
- 77 Elusive sort
- 78 Smooth-talking
- 79 ____ Reader (quarterly magazine)
- 80 Prefix with scope
- 81 Bestow
- 84 "The Wonder Years" star
- 86 Goldman's partner in banking
- 88 Symbol of poverty
- 89 Unwieldy boat
- 90 Visited out of deference (to)
- 94 Bright light in inclement conditions
- 98 Doesn't bring up again, say
- 99 "Sad to say ..."
- 100 Go off
- 101 Dodgers broadcaster
- 106 Hershisier
- 102 K-12
- 103 Casting choice
- 105 Colorless mode at a copy shop
- 107 Strong servings with dessert
- 109 Bit of dental work
- 111 Where the Firestone tire company was founded
- 112 ____ Beso" (Paul Anka hit)
- 113 Sharp
- 114 Bull ____
- 115 Tilted, in Stilton
- 116 Barbecue bone
- 117 Awful-smelling for short
- 118 Went back, as a tide
- 119 Like the Chelsea neighborhood in Manhattan
- DOWN**
- 1 Physician Franz who coined the term "animal magnetism"
- 2 Variant of a gene
- 3 Unsurprising people to show up
- 4 "Inside voices, please"
- 5 ____ Lodge
- 6 "All right, why not?"
- 7 With 90-Down, first woman to lead a major party in Congress
- 8 "Mm-hmm"
- 9 Narrator of "Evita"
- 10 Tremendous auditory pleasure, in slang
- 11 Drink after drink?
- 12 Trunk fastener
- 13 Not remotely
- 14 Traveler's holder of bathroom supplies
- 15 "Kind ____" (term of politeness)
- 16 Thickheaded
- 17 Playground comeback
- 18 Nevada senator Jacky
- 26 Sworn (to)
- 28 Fitting
- 30 Make a decision
- 34 New Mexico county or its seat
- 36 Hit sign
- 38 Wall St. professional
- 39 Hotel rollouts
- 40 "Look what I found!" for short
- 42 Schubert compositions
- 44 Burning the midnight oil
- 45 Dessert with a sugary syrup
- 46 Drake, for one
- 47 Something seen with a tiny flashlight
- 48 What cowboys are, in poker lingo
- 49 High praise
- 51 Home of Spelman College
- 52 Business transaction
- 53 Property recipient, legally
- 56 Related to pitches
- 58 Intensity, with "up"
- 60 Hall-of-Famer Musial
- 61 Like some porch chairs
- 62 Popular radio format
- 63 Farmer's concern
- 67 Turn sharply
- 68 John Le Carré specialty
- 71 "No turning back now"
- 76 [See note]
- 78 List for charitable givers, for short
- 79 Sunscreen ingredient
- 82 Something removed when changing a tire
- 83 Pompous sort
- 84 Domino, familiarly
- 85 /
- 87 Throw in
- 88 Former Indianapolis sports venue
- 90 See 7-Down
- 91 Pulsating
- 92 Analyzed
- 93 "Canada" band, briefly
- 94 Loose around the edges
- 95 Peak in Genesis
- 96 They have thick skins
- 97 Good supply
- 98 Outcast
- 100 Make blank
- 104 Legendary humanoid
- 105 Shapeless mass
- 106 Hapenda room
- 108 Mil. program discontinued in 1976
- 110 Head, in slang



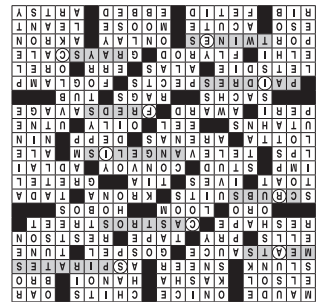
- 48 What cowboys are, in poker lingo
- 49 High praise
- 51 Home of Spelman College
- 52 Business transaction
- 53 Property recipient, legally
- 56 Related to pitches
- 58 Intensity, with "up"
- 60 Hall-of-Famer Musial
- 61 Like some porch chairs
- 62 Popular radio format
- 63 Farmer's concern
- 67 Turn sharply
- 68 John Le Carré specialty
- 71 "No turning back now"
- 76 [See note]
- 78 List for charitable givers, for short
- 79 Sunscreen ingredient
- 82 Something removed when changing a tire
- 83 Pompous sort
- 84 Domino, familiarly
- 85 /
- 87 Throw in
- 88 Former Indianapolis sports venue
- 90 See 7-Down
- 91 Pulsating
- 92 Analyzed
- 93 "Canada" band, briefly
- 94 Loose around the edges
- 95 Peak in Genesis
- 96 They have thick skins
- 97 Good supply
- 98 Outcast
- 100 Make blank
- 104 Legendary humanoid
- 105 Shapeless mass
- 106 Hapenda room
- 108 Mil. program discontinued in 1976
- 110 Head, in slang

GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com. Online: gunstonstreet.com.

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FACES

Christopher Reeve in "Superman"

Warner Bros. photos



Marvel's rivals achieve liftoff

Here are the best, and worst, of the growing ranks of DC superhero movies

By RAFAEL GUZMAN
Newsday

If you thought politics was a good way to start an argument on the internet, try bringing up a DC Comics movie.

For years, DC has been overshadowed by rival comics company Marvel at the movies. With "Iron Man," "Ant-Man," "Guardians of the Galaxy" and many others, the Marvel Cinematic Universe has achieved a magical combination of critical praise, widespread appeal and box-office success. The DC Extended Universe, meanwhile, has also been massively profitable, but the movies have been hard to love. "Man of Steel," for example, the 2013 Superman story that launched the Extended Universe, earned an impressive \$668 million worldwide, but critics gave it a soggy 56 percent rating at Rotten Tomatoes.

Fortunately, DC movies have been improving lately, thanks to the rapturously received "Wonder Woman" — the first superhero film directed by a woman — and the enjoyably silly "Aquaman."

Add a few older titles to those recent triumphs, and you've got enough DC movies to round out a decent Top Ten list.

10. 'Shazam!' (2019)

DC's cheesiest superhero, a teenage boy (Asher Angel) who can turn himself into a red-clad crusader (Zachary Levi) by uttering a silly word, gets exactly the movie he needs: A lighthearted, kid-friendly romp (now in theaters) that's as much about friendship and family as it is about punching villains.

9. 'Aquaman' (2018)

This extremely unpromising superhero — he controls fish? — turns out to be a grunge-rock bar-brawler who likes a tall beer after a night of submarine rescues. Director James Wan (of the "Saw" franchise!) digs into this pulp with gusto and humor.

8. 'The Dark Knight Rises' (2012)

The caper to Christopher Nolan's groundbreaking Batman trilogy suffers from an inaudible villain (Tom Hardy's masked Bane) and too many themes. Still, it thinks big, aims high and looks great.

Gal Gadot in "Wonder Woman"

7. 'Batman Begins' (2005)

Nolan's trilogy opener introduced Christian Bale in the title role, its intelligent dialogue and sophisticated visuals set the stage for a new kind of grown-up superhero film.

6. 'Batman' (1989)

Tim Burton went Goth wild when he took the reins of this one. With an unexpectedly intense Michael Keaton in the title role and Jack Nicholson as a freaky Joker, "Batman" sometimes worked, sometimes didn't. It's still impressive, though, as an early example of a now-ubiquitous genre.

5. 'Batman Returns' (1992)

Danny DeVito's repulsive Penguin sets the tone for Burton's darker, weirder follow-up to his 1989 film. This time, Batman feels as badly damaged as his villains — the very point of the character, of course. And don't forget Michelle Pfeiffer, still the sexiest Catwoman.



Ben Affleck, left, and Henry Cavill in "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice"

The bottom 5

5. 'Green Lantern' (2011): This jade-colored turkey would have killed most careers, but Ryan Reynolds bounced back nicely with the "Deadpool" franchise.

4. 'Superman IV: The Quest for Peace' (1987): Even worse than the Richard Pryor comedy "Superman III?" Yes.

3. 'Suicide Squad' (2016): The idea: Villains become heroes. The look: Goth-rock circa 1995. The verdict: Shoot me.

2. 'Justice League' (2017): The most annoying (Ezra Miller's Flash) and the most boring (Ray Fisher's Cyborg) join the bigger heroes, with dismal results.

1. 'Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice' (2016): Ben Affleck's Batman and Henry Cavill's Superman basically have a staring contest for 2½ hours.

4. 'Wonder Woman' (2017)

DC notched a gender milestone with this female superhero movie, the first to be directed by a woman (Patty Jenkins). The movie is a total triumph, with a majestic Gal Gadot in the lead, a swooningly romantic subplot (Chris Pine is the brave mortal Steve Trevor) and just the right touch of humor.

3. 'Superman II' (1980)

Richard Lester's film is very nearly the equal of the 1978 original. This one pushes our hero into new territory, turning him briefly mortal. Terence Stamp, as the arrogant General Zod, remains an iconic villain.

2. 'Superman' (1978)

There's a magic to Richard Donner's 40-year-old film that hasn't dimmed. Part of it is the unknown and ever-so-earnest Christopher Reeve in the title role. Part of it is Margot Kidder as the tough-talking reporter. Irresistible, even today.

1. 'The Dark Knight' (2008)

Heath Ledger's frightening performance as the Joker, which earned him a posthumous Oscar, will always be the headline here, but the movie's dystopian parallel to our troubled world hit hard and still packs a punch.

Nipsey Hussle's sales and streams soar

As the world mourns the death of rapper Nipsey Hussle, more people are listening to his music: His sales and streams have increased since he died Sunday.

Nielsen Music told The Associated Press that 2,000 copies of his albums were purchased the day he died, followed by 9,000 copies on Monday and 4,000 copies on Tuesday. That's in contrast to last Friday and Saturday when he sold just a few albums — an amount Nielsen Music said is too small to report.

Typically following a death, a musician's albums sales will jump greatly.

On Wednesday, Hussle's major-label debut album, 2018's "Victory Lap," was No. 1 on the iTunes albums chart, while his 2013 mixtape, "Crenshaw," was No. 5. Several of Hussle's songs, including "Racks In the Middle," "Double Up" and "Grinding All My Life," have landed on the Spotify and iTunes charts. By mid-afternoon on Wednesday, 10 of the Top 50 songs on Apple Music belonged to Hussle.

Sales for Hussle's songs jumped from 1,000 to 14,000 on Sunday, Nielsen Music said. The next two days he sold 58,000 and 36,000 singles.

Hussle averaged close to 2 million audio streams before his death, but on Sunday he earned 10 million audio streams and 57 million on Monday. His video streams jumped from 900,000 to 9.7 million on the day he died. Hussle, 33, was shot and killed in front of his south Los Angeles clothing store Sunday, not far from where the rapper grew up.

Cardi B leads with 21 Billboard Awards noms

Cardi B is the leading contender at the 2019 Billboard Music Awards with 21 nominations.

NBC and dick Clark productions announced Thursday the 26-year-old rapper is up for honors including top artist, top female artist and top Billboard 200 album for her Grammy-winning release, "Invasion of Privacy."

Drake and Post Malone are close behind with 17 nominations each. They will compete for the show's biggest prize on May 1 — top artist — along with Cardi B, Ariana Grande and Travis Scott, who scored 12 nominations.

Other news

■ Celine Dion is ending her Las Vegas residency early but her superstar singer will keep herself busy. Dion said Wednesday that she will kick off her Courage World Tour in Quebec City, Canada, on Sept. 18, and will make stops in more than 50 cities, including Miami, Los Angeles, Montreal, Chicago and Brooklyn. Dion, 51, said she is expecting to release "Courage," her 12th studio album, in November.

■ Britney Spears is taking time to care for herself after supporting her father and the rest of her family through his recent health struggles, the Los Angeles Times has confirmed. She will be away for 30 days.

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OPINION

Whistleblowers are gutsy. Protect them.

By HARRY LITMAN
Special to The Washington Post

A longtime security adviser's account of rampant abuses in the security-clearance process at the Trump White House provides a case study of the importance of robust whistleblower protections to uncover illegal governmental practices.

Tricia Newbold recently told the House Oversight and Reform Committee that, on at least 25 occasions, political officials within the administration granted security clearances to applicants after their office had recommended against them.

On Tuesday, the House Judiciary Committee voted to issue a subpoena to Carl Kline, the political appointee whom Newbold placed at the center of the alleged abuse. Kline, at the time, was White House personnel security director. The White House declined to comment on the subpoena; Kline's lawyer said the "facts will prove that he acted appropriately at all times."

Newbold has worked in the White House's personnel security office for more than 18 years, serving in Republican and Democratic administrations, and rising to the top career position leading a team that adjudicates security clearances. Her team's job is to ensure compliance with a detailed web of regulations to protect the integrity of the security-clearance process and, more importantly, to ensure that clearances do not go to people who present security risks to the United States.

Beginning in the summer of 2017, according to Newbold, Kline overrode dozens of security-clearance denial recommendations, including those of two current senior White House officials. Newbold said the team's recommendations were based on well-known factors indicating security

risks — including applicants' conflicts of interest, drug abuse, financial problems and ties to foreign influence.

Newbold told the committee that she pointed out the irregularities to Kline, the White House counsel's office and the office of the president, but she got no response.

It was then, she says, when matters turned sinister. In legal papers filed as part of an administrative appeal, Newbold has asserted that Kline engaged in petty slights against Newbold and her team, and then, citing insubordination, moved to suspend Newbold for two weeks. Moreover, Newbold contends that Kline ignored or violated a series of executive orders and regulatory requirements, beginning with Executive Order 12958, which governs access to classified information. He also repeatedly removed and redacted forms from political appointees' files, she says.

Newbold has challenged her suspension, saying it is a reprisal for her revelations of Kline's misconduct. That challenge is being adjudicated by the federal office.

If accurate, Newbold's allegations suggest a crass corruption of the security-clearance process that placed national security second to political influence. According to Newbold, Kline and others ignored legal procedures designed to safeguard U.S. security interests and engaged in a pattern of abuse to control their employees trying to uphold the law. As a consequence, dozens of individuals may currently be vulnerable to blackmail by foreign powers or may otherwise present opportunities for our adversaries.

It is an issue of national security that should prompt bipartisan action.

It is fortunate for the public interest that Newbold had a place to bring her account. Indeed, but for the break on the Republi-

can stranglehold of all branches of government, it is likely that Newbold's story would not have come to light.

Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., chairman of the Oversight Committee, has demanded that White House counsel Pat Cipollone turn over documents connected to the security-clearance process. Cipollone has so far refused on the grounds that the decision whether to grant security clearances "belongs exclusively" to the executive branch. Cipollone's argument misses the point. The executive may have the constitutional power to make final security-clearance determinations. It does not follow that the exercise of that power can't constitute an abuse or can't subject the country to unwarranted security risks. That is the purpose of oversight. In light of the credible allegations from Newbold and others, it is incumbent on the White House to explain the security-clearance adjudications of political appointees.

In my private legal practice, I represent whistleblowers who have come forward against the government. It's not in everyone's constitution to be a whistleblower. It takes a certain combination of doggedness, integrity and stamina. And it generally exacts a high cost. As Newbold told the committee, "I'm terrified of going back. I know that this will not be perceived in favor of my situation, so it is to bring back the integrity of the office."

But whistleblowers play an indispensable role in ferreting out illegal conduct and returning billions of dollars to the government, and protecting their efforts is good public policy. It is a good thing that Newbold had the guts to come forward.

Harry Litman, a Washington Post contributing columnist, is a former U.S. attorney and deputy assistant attorney general.

There's no point system for determining harassment

By MONICA HESSE

The Washington Post

Here are the Joe Biden tiles, scattered like Scrabble tiles, waiting to be connected into something coherent:

Joe Biden hugs women, in a way that can look creepy when caught on camera, in a way that can apparently feel creepy to the women experiencing it, as former Nevada lieutenant gubernatorial candidate Lucy Flores shared last week. He came up behind her at a campaign event, she says, leaned in, smelled the back of her head and slowly kissed her hair.

So Joe Biden does more than hug women, apparently — he also does "slow hair kissing" for years. He's been doing this, sometimes, to men, as well.

Joe Biden says it was "never 'his' intention" to make anyone uncomfortable.

Joe Biden doesn't make everyone uncomfortable: Stephanie Carter, who had been the alleged "victim" in a "Creepy Uncle Joe" meme, posted an essay on Sunday clarifying that Biden is a friend. She'd viewed his extended shoulder rub as comforting and supportive at her husband's swearing-in as defense secretary.

Those are the Biden tiles; we're all playing with an identical set. The facts aren't in question, as there were almost always photographs present. But over the past several days, some people have arranged them, ominously, into "PREDATOR," or earnestly, into "TEARDROP," and some people have arranged them innocuously into "PARROT," and Scrabble morons like me have spelled out "FOE" and called it a day. Into the protests, we can throw the nuances. The double-letter and triple-word

scores. The context, the backstory, the things we've gotten better at understanding and talking about. Things like:

People of all genders have vastly different comfort levels when it comes to being touched, personally by strangers, or being touched by vice presidents.

People are allowed to be the narrators of their own stories. They do not have to be offended by something because someone else says; they also don't get to declare something inoffensive just because it wouldn't personally offend them.

Sometimes, the exact same gesture is welcomed when one person performs it and unwelcome when it comes from another source. Some gestures are generally accepted as friendly rather than predatory — a handshake, a smile. But in certain circumstances, even those can feel wrong, in ways we can struggle to articulate.

Some gestures look creepy but in certain circumstances aren't creepy, in ways we can struggle to articulate.

Not all buffoonery is malevolent. Not

all buffoonery can perpetually get away with saying "I didn't realize," because after a while, after enough onlookers have said, "Hey, that's gross," they should have realized.

As vice president, could Joe Biden — a man accustomed to supporters lining up for handshakes and autographs — have wrongly assumed women and men to be the same? Or did he not realize that they actually were? Sure. As vice president, should Joe Biden also have been ultra-aware that women and men who were uncomfortable might feel they were unable to say so? Sure. Yes. Definitely.

Playing Joe Biden Scrabble is a losing proposition because the context you're applying to the game can have such a drastic

impact on the final score.

Where is the Anita Hill square, for example? Where is the square that acknowledges Biden's presiding role during her agonizing Senate testimony and how his witness status affected the handling of it? Have continued to be tepid?

Where is the Hugh Downs? The square that acknowledges that most people criticizing Biden, including Lucy Flores, are not classifying what he does as sexual assault. They're classifying it as an ugh. A warning sign, his says. "Ugh, don't do that." You won't be arrested or fined for it, but if you want to model impeccable goody-goody statesmanship, then don't.

Or, don't do it to everyone, at least. Going forward, remember that Stephanie Carter and Lucy Flores received nearly identical treatment, but that's not how the spelling "COMFORTING" and one of them used nearly the same tiles to spell "MORTIFYING."

This is the point in the discussion where a lot of folks want to throw their hands in the air and threaten to stop playing the game. To make this too hard, there are too many rules, that it's impossible to navigate a world in which some women are fine with things and some women aren't — that the subjectivity of it all makes it impossible.

The subjectivity doesn't make it impossible, though. The subjectivity makes it hard.

I can't help but feel that every time we have a national conversation about sexual harassment, what we're looking for is a way to make it into a Scrabble game. A way to say: Here is the instruction manual, here is the point system, here's how you win. But it doesn't work that way. It never will.

Monica Hesse is a columnist for The Washington Post's Style section and author of "American Fire."

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Considering medications that can reduce opioid deaths

USA Today

Walter Ginter began using heroin in the early 1970s while serving in the Army. By 1977, desperate to kick the habit, he turned to daily doses of methadone, a synthetic opioid that eases withdrawal and decreases cravings. The treatment worked.

"I have a good life today," says Ginter, 69, project director for the New York-based Medication Assisted Recovery Support Project. "I wouldn't have it without medication."

Ginter was a member of a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine committee that examined the three medications — methadone, buprenorphine (typically sold under the Suboxone brand name) and extended-release naltrexone (Vivitrol) — that the government has approved to treat opioid addiction.

Two days before the Mueller report landed at the Justice Department, the National Academies' report was released March 20 with little fanfare and less attention than it deserves. Its recommendations, if more widely embraced, have the potential to significantly reduce the toll of the nation's opioid epidemic.

The findings are unambiguous: "These are highly effective medications, and they save lives," says Alan Leshner, chairman of the panel that prepared the study. Yet not everyone could benefit from the drugs don't receive them.

More than 2 million people in America are estimated to have opioid use disorder, but less than 20% are being treated with these medications. Of the residential treatment programs in the USA, only 36% offered any medications in 2016, and only 6% offered all three.

The medications, of course, aren't a panacea for the opioid epidemic that has ravaged the nation by increasing crime, reducing productivity, spreading infectious diseases, clogging emergency rooms, and taking an incalculable toll on families.

It's also difficult to get people who are addicted to accept treatment, and to stick with it once they begin. Some people can succeed without medications, but the vast majority who try to do so end up relapsing.

Like any medication, each of the three Food and Drug Administration-approved drugs has drawbacks.

Methadone is typically administered only through dosages given out daily at regulated clinics; areas around the clinics have been known to serve as magnets for heroin dealers looking for customers. Buprenorphine tablets and under-the-tongue films can be misused or diverted. Naltrexone can only be administered to people who've been opioid-free for about a week, and it has high discontinuation rates.

Even so, all of the drugs alleviate withdrawal symptoms, curb opioid cravings, and reduce relapse and death rates. For people who stay on the approved medications for the long term, the risk of mortality drops by 70%, according to Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, which co-sponsored the National Academies report.

Why aren't these life-saving drugs used more widely?

One reason is that opioid addiction is too often regarded as a moral weakness or failure of willpower, rather than a treatable chronic brain disorder.

Other reasons include inadequate edu-



SETH WENG/AP

People take pictures of a brain-shaped floral arrangement with paper poppies in New York on Tuesday. The display is to bring attention to the stigma of opioid addiction: Cut paper black poppies will slowly cover the arrangement to emphasize that addiction is a brain disease and should not be stigmatized as a failure of the sufferer.

cation and training of personnel who work with people who are addicted, excessive regulations surrounding distribution of the medications, and highly fragmented payment policies.

Among the steps that can and should be taken:

- Allow methadone to be distributed, by prescription, in settings such as drugstores or doctors' offices.
- Certify more doctors to prescribe buprenorphine, and loosen the unnecessarily strict training requirements.
- Require prisons to offer the medications, and Medicaid to cover their cost.
- Do more research into which combinations of medications and behavioral interventions are most effective in treating addiction.

Overdoses of legally prescribed and illicit opioids killed more than 47,000 people in 2017 alone. An additional 500,000 lives could be lost in the next decade, more people than in the city of Atlanta.

Make Nipsey Hussle's legacy be a safer, fairer community

Los Angeles Times

The killing of rapper Nipsey Hussle on Sunday afternoon was especially heart-breaking because of his journey — from his participation in Los Angeles street gang life in his young adulthood to musical and commercial success and ultimately leadership in the fight against violence. He emerged, he created, he invested in his neighborhood, and he led, only to be shot dead in the bright afternoon outside his own clothing store.

Born Ermas Davidson Asghedom, Hussle earned the deep respect of other artists, many of whom paid him tribute in the aftermath of the killing. That's as it should be, but in mourning his death and decrying the killing, it's essential to remember that too many young men whose names are known only to their families and friends are lost to violence before they have a chance to make their own mark in the world. Some of the most gifted hip-hop artists have come from the streets of South Los Angeles and used their considerable talents to document and comment upon a life that a modern, wealthy society like our own should not countenance. Young African American men deserve the same life as their counterparts in other parts of town, without gangs, without gangs, without hustling, with education rather than incarceration, with safe streets, with adults able to find good jobs. Struggle and inequality can make for great art among a select few, but as Hussle's killing reminds us, their

artistry and their success does not necessarily free them.

So how do we make it better? The Los Angeles Police Department responds to spikes in gang violence by swarming the streets with cops to search cars for guns and question young men who might look like perpetrators or victims. And it works — in the sense that guns are found and confiscated, crime abates and residents are safer from gun violence for a period of time. But the police often leave behind a community that feels invaded, violated, disrespected. Hurt and anger grow. Violence returns.

There may be better ideas, different things to try, and some of them may have been among the topics that Hussle was planning to discuss with Police Commission President Steve Soboroff and LAPD Chief Michel Moore on Monday afternoon. Meetings were to go forward in Hussle's absence, and in his memory. In remembering Hussle, let's remember as well those many young men and women, their families and their neighbors, who continue to be affected by violence.

Lightfoot's a trailblazer with a chance to improve her city

Chicago Tribune

Lori Lightfoot, a former federal prosecutor and the ninth candidate to jump into the race for Chicago mayor 11 months ago, won election Tuesday in a nearly 3-to-1 landslide over establishment candidate Toni Preckwinkle, an early favorite in a crowded field. A likely reaction from the Chicago Home for Experienced Political Pros: How'd that happen?

Lightfoot will take her oath of office next month, replacing two-term Mayor Rahm Emanuel. He leaves City Hall steadier financially than when he took office in 2011 — although Chicago and its taxpayers still face deep debts and structural deficits.

So who's the mayor-elect who must confront all of this? The Ohio-born Lightfoot, 56, lives in Logan Square on the city's Near Northwest Side with her wife, Amy Esheleman, and their 11-year-old daughter. Lightfoot got into the race in May 2018 to challenge Emanuel, who had appointed her to two police oversight posts but who, she thought, wasn't addressing Chicago's underdeveloped neighborhoods or the exodus of residents from them. After Emanuel announced in September that he wouldn't run again, some higher-profile candidates — Preckwinkle among them — jumped in.

Lightfoot mounted a strong, steady campaign that broke nearly every rule in Chicago's political playbook. Pundits dis-

missed her viability early on, saying she had "no path" to victory. What was the constituency for a black, gay corporate attorney facing a field of mostly insiders?

And rather than benefit from what's left of the Democratic machine in these non-partisan elections, Lightfoot beat all of its preferred candidates.

She didn't have the endorsements of city aldermen that often translate into Election Day success. She didn't have a ground game.

Lightfoot comes across in person as reserved. But she dove into retail politicking and handshaking. Rather than relying solely on paid advertising, she went everywhere and met with everyone.

She also ran on ideas. While many candidates get away with brushing past specifics, Lightfoot on several controversial subject areas — curbing violence, overhauling the Chicago Police Department, encouraging affordable housing, reforming the City Council and expanding City Hall transparency, to name a few — offered detailed proposals. She answered questions steadily. She didn't always stick to careful talking points.

How Lightfoot embraced running for mayor, and how Chicagoans citywide embraced her, brought refreshing change to Chicago politics. She broke the typical campaign template and won. We think she'll govern just as capably.

Although ride-sharing is new, established safety steps apply

The Post and Courier of Charleston, S.C.

One of the first things we teach our children is to never, ever get into a stranger's car.

In the age of Uber and Lyft, we all need to relay that lesson. Along with: The later you're out at night, the greater your chances of running into the wrong person. And: It's always safer to travel in groups.

Nothing can ever mitigate the heart-breaking tragedy of the killing of University of South Carolina student Samantha Josephson, who was abducted and slain after she told what she mistakenly thought was an Uber ride-share she had ordered. But maybe it can be some small comfort to her family if her death leads more young people to follow the advice of Josephson's father, Seymour Josephson, who urged students to stay in groups at night and called on ride-sharing services to do more to make sure passengers get into the right cars.

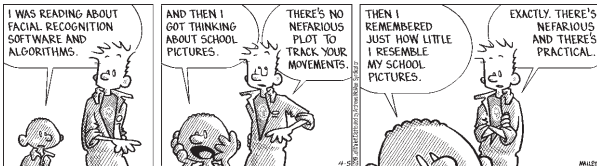
It's never been safe to be out in bar districts in the wee hours of the morning, and certainly not to leave your friends and strike out on your own. But the ubiquity of ride-sharing services — which many of us inexplicably consider safer than the more traditional means of transport, including identifiable taxi services — has caused many people to let down their guard. Not only do we wander out alone, sometimes after consuming too much alcohol to drive safely, but we don't follow basic safety precautions when we think we spot our ride.

Gregory Yee and Andy Spain of The Post and Courier took it to a new level. The owner who recounted three instances of young women trying to get into his car on a recent night when he was serving as designated driver for a group of friends in Columbia's Five Points, the bar district from which Josephson was abducted.

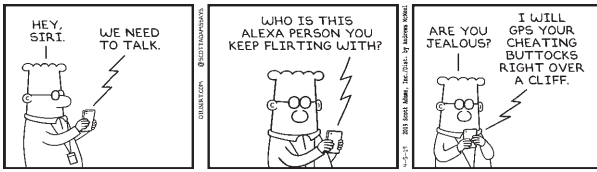
While lawmakers, regulators and the ride-share services consider what additional measures are needed, there are several precautions everyone who uses the services can and should take to protect their own safety.

Perhaps most importantly, if you don't feel safe, walk away. Don't worry about being charged for canceling a ride; ride-sharing services usually will refund the money if you don't show up. And even if they don't, the money isn't worth your life.

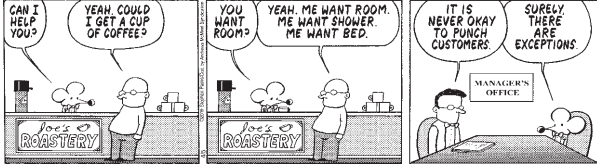
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



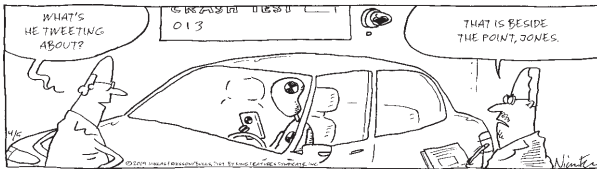
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14				
15				16				17				
18				19								
20			21		22				23	24	25	26
			27	28				29	30			
31	32	33						34				
35				36				37				
38				39	40				41	42	43	44
				45				46		47		
48	49	50	51							52		
53						54				55		
56						57				58		

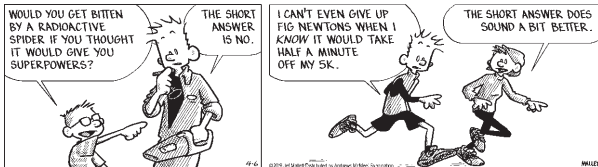
- ACROSS**
1 Baseball's Ripken
4 Glacial
7 Mrs. Flintstone
12 Baton Rouge sch.
13 Extinct New Zealand bird
14 Figure of speech
15 "— showtime!"
16 Parthenon locale
18 "The A-Team" actor
19 Le — (French newspaper)
20 Pear tree
22 Sugary suffix
23 Actress Tyne
27 Director Howard
29 Cut up, as a pizza
31 Metric measure
34 Desert haven
35 Tam topper
37 "Ray Donovan" actor Voight
38 Money maven Orman
39 Vichy water
41 Latin love
45 Shadow
47 Mimic
48 Maryland's capital
52 Composer Rorem
53 Got wind of
54 Kreskin's claim
- DOWN**
1 Scale
2 Houston player
3 Has an intense craving
4 Mosque leader
5 Butterfly protector
6 Tales
7 Use a sponge
8 Altar promise
9 Dogpatch adjective
10 Miss Piggy's pronoun
11 Early hrs.
17 Rhyming tributes
21 Thin pancake
23 Hunting goddess
24 Rm. coolers
25 Island garland
26 QB's gains
28 Spanish gold
30 Privy
31 Vinyl records
32 Debtor's letters
33 Celeb gossip site
36 Office note
37 Legal expert
40 More skilled
42 Food from heaven
43 Verdi work
44 — a beet
45 High hairstyle
46 Nile vipers
48 Spa sounds
49 PBS funder
50 Opposing vote
51 MGM motto start

Answer to Previous Puzzle

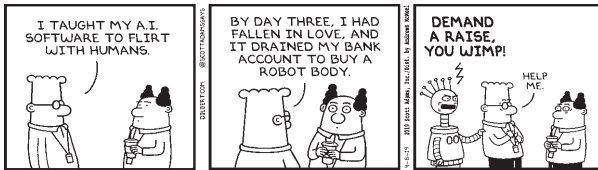
S	P	A	I	L	H	O	W	S
H	A	M	O	R	S	O	D	I
A	M	P	H	I	B	I	A	M
E	A	R	S	T	E	E	R	E
B	A	R	T	O	N	H	A	R
A	B	A	T	A	G	T	U	B
L	E	G	O	Y	U	P	N	O
E	L	E	C	T	M	E	R	O
T	O	T	C	A	F	T	A	N
N	A	T	A	S	H	A	T	I
E	L	E	V	E	X	I	T	R
E	I	N	E	T	E	L	L	M
D	A	D	S	A	L	E	P	O

4-5 CRYPTOQUIP
MPFO PW FOD QPVHB SPIQF
HFFDKRHKFG HQD UQDFFV
GUAFDWIB, MIF FOHF PKD
AG H SHFFADQ SPIQFADQ.
Yesterday's Cryptquip: SPECIAL COMPUTER MEMORY UNITS MADE TO BE USED BY ACTRESS REID AND SKATER LIPINSKI: TARA BYTES.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: Q equals R

Frazz



Dilbert



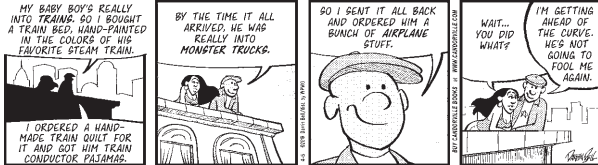
Pearls Before Swine



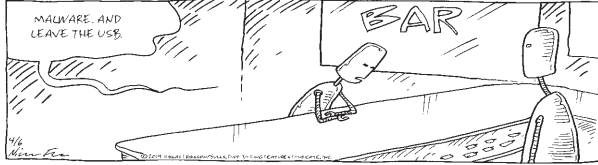
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18				19					20			
			21						22			
23	24	25		26					27	28	29	
30				31					32			
33				34					35			
			36						37			
38	39	40							41			
45									46			
48									49			
51									52			
									53			

ACROSS

- 1 Sharp turn
- 4 Help a crook
- 8 Feudal slave
- 12 — blind
- 13 Put on
- 14 Tow
- 15 Up to
- 16 Taj Mahal city
- 17 Canadian gas brand
- 18 Gorgonzola, for one
- 21 Hairi Addams cousin
- 22 Bit of advice
- 23 Forgeries
- 26 Clear the deck?
- 27 Melancholy
- 30 Incursion
- 31 Ruin the veneer
- 32 Robust
- 33 Thanksgiving veggie
- 34 Prom rental
- 35 Washer phase
- 36 Droop
- 37 Abysmal
- 38 Brunch entree
- 45 Heap
- 46 Roll call reply
- 47 Literary collection
- 48 On the briny
- 49 Hurler Hersher

DOWN

- 1 Tubular pasta
- 2 "What's — for me?"
- 3 Fancy party
- 4 Expects
- 5 Sired
- 6 Deserve
- 7 Deere product
- 8 Bo Peep's charges
- 9 Lighten
- 10 Senator Feingold
- 11 Drifting ice
- 19 Fibbed
- 20 Trendy
- 23 Saute
- 24 Bond rating
- 25 Klipping lad
- 26 Upper limit
- 27 Pouch
- 28 100 percent
- 29 Scottish river
- 31 Hood's photo
- 32 Jekyll's bad side
- 34 — chi
- 35 Caravan mammals
- 36 Sly one
- 37 Yawning, maybe
- 38 Pesky email
- 39 Tower city
- 40 Sir Guinness
- 41 Wife of Zeus
- 42 Volcanic flow
- 43 Eve's grandson
- 44 Chat

Answer to Previous Puzzle

C	A	L	I	C	Y	W	I	L	M	A
L	S	U	M	O	A	I	D	I	O	M
I	T	S	A	C	R	O	P	O	L	I
M	R	T	M	O	N	D	E			
B	O	S	C	O	S	E	D	A	L	Y
			R	O	N		S	L	I	C
L	I	T	E	R				O	A	S
P	O	M	P	O	M		J	O	N	
S	U	Z	E		E	A	U	A	M	O
			U	M	B	R	A		A	P
A	N	N	A	P	O	L	I	S	N	E
H	E	A	R	D		E	S	P	N	R
S	A	Y	S	O		R	T	S	A	A

4-6

CRYPTOQUIP

J G O E L G O X H Q R Q B O L

C X X O U O V X U O O H C J - Z T Q H S L I

Q Z T Q U S T R K , Q G T D O K S D E

K Q S W "L Q E B K X C U E C L G S E D !"

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BOTH OF THE ROYAL COURT ATTENDANTS ARE PRETTY SPITEFUL, BUT THAT ONE IS A CATTIER COURTIER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals L

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Reader Letters	letters@stripes.com

Advertising	Kristi Kimmel kimmel.kristi@stripes.com +49(0)631-3615-9013 DSN 314,583,9013
Circulation	Robert Reismann reismann.robert@stripes.com +49(0)631,3615,9150 DSN 314,583,9150
Reader Letters	letters@stripes.com

Advertising	Ichiro Katayangi CustomerHelp@stripes.com +81(3) 6385,3267 DSN 315,229,3267
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Announcements 040

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Automotive 140

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College baseball

Wednesday's scores

EAST
Bryant 2, Rhode Island 0
Quinnipiac 6, Binghamton 4
CSU 10, Bucknell 9
Fordham 5, Siena 4, 10 innings
Fairfield 10, Yale 9
Georgetown 4, George Mason 1
Harford 7, Boston College 4
Holy Cross 16, Dartmouth 10
Liberty 10, Elon 1
LIU Brooklyn 10, Hofstra 1
Marshall 10, W. Carolina 9
Mid-Eastern Shore 15, Mount St.

MIDWEST
Monmouth (N.J.) 11, Princeton 6
Northwestern at Adams, p.p.d.
Old Westbury 3, Manhattanville 8
Rider 16, NJIT 10
Rutgers 11, Wagner 10
St. Bonaventure 18, Penn St. 6
Tennessee 10, Middle Tennessee 7
Stony Brook 11, Iona 7
Tulsa 1, Grove City 3
UConn 10, UMass-Lowell 4
UNC 5, Navy 3
West Virginia 5, Pittsburgh 4

SOUTH
Clemson 3, N.C. Central 1
Charleston Southern 10, The Citadel 5
Charlotte 12, UNC-Charlotte 2
East Carolina 5, Duke 1
East Kentucky 5, Xavier 3
Florida 13, Florida Gulf Coast 1
Georgia Tech 13, Bridgewater (Va.) 10
FAU 6, Miami 4
Gardner-Webb 10, Davidson 1
Georgia 7, Kennesaw St. 6
Indiana State 3, Col. of Charleston 6
Louisiana 12, New Orleans 4
Marquette 10, Lafayette 3
NJ 2, South Alabama 0
North Carolina 10, McNeese 4
Mississippi St. 1, Louisiana-Monroe 8
Missouri St. 15, Murray St. 10
New York 10, Penn State 1
Richmond 11, Norfolk St. 1
Sam Houston 1, North Alabama 3
S.C. Upstate 4, N.C. A&T 3, 10 innings
William & Mary 8, Maryland 1

MIDWEST
Ball St. 12, Manchester 8
Bowling Green 12, Dayton 8
Bradley 5, SIU Edwardsville 6
Central Michigan 1, Ohio St. 2
Clemson 8, Culver-Stockton 1
Concordia (Ill.) 10, DePauw 2, p.p.d.
Creighton at Omaha, p.p.d., weather
Dakota St. 1, Dallas Baptist 1
Eastern Michigan 10, Marquette 1
E. Illinois 11, Illinois College 1
Indiana State 10, Coastal Carolina 1
Illinois St. 11, Iowa 6
Iowa State 7, N. State 6
Lawrence Tech at Grace (Ind.) 3, 25 seconds
Marquette 10, St. Benedict's 1
Michigan 8, Toledo 2
Milwaukee 4, N. Illinois 2
Missouri 10, Kansas St. 2
Oakland 14, E. Michigan 9
Portland 4, Lindenwood-Belleville 3
UIC 4, Northwestern 2
Youngstown St. 4, Kent St. 11, 10 innings

SOUTHWEST
Ark.-Pine Bluff 5, San Diego F Austin 4
Houston 5, FIU 4
Icamorta 10, Word at Adams-CC, ccd., weather
Delta 7, Arkansas St. 4
Florida 10, Houston-Victoria 9
Texas Southern 11, Wiley 6

FAIR WEATHER
Nevada 6, Sacramento St. 2
New Mexico 10, Texas Tech 9
Oregon St. 8, San Diego St. 1

AP spotlight

April 5 — Jess Willard beats Jack Johnson in the 26th round to win the world heavyweight boxing title in Havana.
1927 — Johnny Weissmuller breaks his own world freestyle record by seven seconds in 2:08. He also lowers his own 100-yard freestyle time to 51 seconds, a record that stood for 17 years.
1962 — Henry Wittenberg wins the 1962 AAU wrestling title for the eighth time. Wittenberg won over 350 titles in his 13 years, including a gold medal in the 1948 Olympics.
1987 — Art Wall finishes five of the last six holes to cap a final-round even lead and Fred Hawkins by one stroke to win the 1987 PGA Championship.
1972 — For the first time in history, male basketball players wore the same uniform as the female players, which started a general player strike, which started AAU and AIAA basketball in 1973.
1997 — Bruce Baumgartner wins a record eighth World Cup wrestling gold medal in Beijing, Davos, Tech 9 overtime at 27½ points as the United States routs Russia 25-7.

College basketball

Men's NCAA Tournament

EAST REGIONAL
At Washington
Regional Semifinals
Friday, March 29
Michigan State 68, LSU 67
Duke 77, Virginia Tech 62
Regional Championship
Saturday, March 30
Michigan State 68, Duke 67
SOUTH REGIONAL
At Louisville, Ky.
Regional Semifinals
Thursday, March 28
Purdue 66, Minnesota 54, OT
Virginia 53, Oregon 49
Regional Championship
Friday, March 29
Virginia 80, Purdue 75, OT
MIDWEST REGIONAL
At Kansas City, Mo.
Regional Semifinals
Friday, March 29
Auburn 87, North Carolina 62, Houston 58
Regional Championship
Saturday, March 30
Auburn 77, Kentucky 71, OT
WEST REGIONAL
At Anaheim, Calif.
Regional Semifinals
Thursday, March 28
Gonzaga 72, Florida State 63
Texas Tech 63, Michigan 44
Regional Championship
Friday, March 29
Texas Tech 75, Gonzaga 69
FINAL FOUR
At Minneapolis
National Semifinals
Saturday, April 6
Michigan (32-3), Auburn (30-9)
Virginia State (32-6) vs. Texas Tech (30-6)
National Championship
Monday, April 8
West Virginia vs. Texas Tech
Semifinal winners

Men's NIT
At Madison Square Garden
New York
Championship
At Madison Square Garden
New York City
Thursday, April 4
Lipscomb (29-7) vs. Texas (20-16)

CBI
Championship Series
East-West Division
Monday, April 1
South Florida 73, DePaul 61
Wednesday, April 3
DePaul 100, South Florida 76, OT, series tied 1-1
Friday, April 5
South Florida (23-4) vs. DePaul (19-16)

CIT
Semifinals
Tuesday, April 2
Marshall 59, Hampton 57
Green Bay 87, South Eastern 86, OT
Thursday, April 4
Marshall (22-14) vs. Green Bay (21-16)

Women's NCAA Tournament
GREENSBORO REGIONAL
At Greensboro, N.C.
Regional Semifinals
Saturday, March 30
Iowa 79, N. State 6
Jays 73, South Carolina 68
Regional Championship
Monday, April 1
Baylor 85, Iowa 61
PORTLAND REGIONAL
At Portland, Ore.
Regional Semifinals
Friday, March 29
Mississippi State 70, Arizona State 53
Oregon 63, South Dakota State 53
Sunday, March 31
Oregon 63, Mississippi State 84
CHICAGO REGIONAL
Regional Semifinals
Saturday, March 30
Notre Dame 67, Texas A&M 60
Stanford 55, Missouri State 46
Regional Championship
Monday, April 1
Notre Dame 84, Stanford 68
ALBANY REGIONAL
At Albany, N.Y.
Regional Semifinals
Friday, March 29
UConn 69, UMass 61
FINAL FOUR
At Tampa, Fla.
National Semifinals
Friday, April 5
Baylor (35-0) vs. Oregon (33-4)
UConn (35-2) vs. Notre Dame (34-3)
Sunday, April 7
Semifinal winners

Women's NIT
Semifinals
Tuesday, April 2
Northwestern 74, James Madison 69
Arizona 50, UConn 53

WBI
Championship
Wednesday, April 3
Appalachian State 16, North Texas 59

Pro soccer

MLS

EASTERN CONFERENCE
W L T Pts GF GA
D.C. United 3 0 0 9 10 6
Columbus 3 1 1 10 6 4
Toronto FC 3 0 0 9 10 6
New York Red Bulls 2 2 1 7 7 7
Cincinnati 2 2 1 7 7 7
Chicago 1 2 2 5 5 5
Orlando City 1 2 2 5 5 5
New York City FC 1 2 1 4 5 9
New England 1 2 1 4 5 9
Philadelphia 0 2 2 2 6 6
Atlanta 0 2 2 2 6 6
WESTERN CONFERENCE
W L T Pts GF GA
Los Angeles FC 3 0 1 10 10 3
Seattle 3 0 1 10 10 3
Houston 3 0 1 10 10 3
Portland 3 0 1 10 10 3
LA Galaxy 3 0 1 9 9 7
Sporting KC 3 0 1 9 7 6
Minnesota United 2 2 0 6 9 9
Real Salt Lake 2 2 0 6 9 9
Colorado 0 3 2 2 6 12
Vancouver 0 3 1 1 4 7
San Jose 0 4 0 0 2 14

Friday, April 5
LA Galaxy at Vancouver
Saturday, April 6
Montreal at D.C. United
Chicago at Toronto FC
Los Angeles FC at D.C. United
Minnesota United at New York City FC
Orlando City at D.C. United
FC Dallas at Philadelphia
New England at Columbus
Portland at San Jose
Real Salt Lake at Seattle
Sunday, April 7
Sporting Kansas City at Cincinnati
Sunday, April 7
Montreal at D.C. United
Wednesday, April 10
Seattle at Chicago
Friday, April 12
Columbus at Montreal
San Jose at Houston
Toronto FC at Seattle
Portland at D.C. United
Atlanta at New York City FC
Orlando City at Real Salt Lake
D.C. United at Colorado
Philadelphia at LA Galaxy
Philadelphia at Los Angeles FC
Sunday, April 14
New York at Sporting Kansas City

Boxing
Fight schedule
April 5
At Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Davey Oliver Joyce vs. Stephen Tiffiney, 10, for the vacant WBO European featherweight title
At Sam's Town Hotel & Gambling Hall, Las Vegas, Angelo Loza vs. Neil Tabano, 10, junior featherweights; Xavier Martinez vs. John Moralejo, 10, junior lightweight; Cameron Kradt vs. Angel Hernandez, welterweights.
April 12
At Staples Center, Los Angeles, Vassily Lomachenko vs. Yuriy Grolla, 12, for Lomachenko's WBA/WBO lightweight title; Gilberto Ramirez vs. Tommy Karpentier, 10, light heavyweight; Arnold Barboza vs. Mike Alvarado 10, welterweights.
At Atlantic City, N.J., Jermaine Franklin vs. Rydell Booker, 11, heavyweight; Otto Wallin vs. Nick Kimble, 10, heavyweight.
At Minneapolis Armory, Caleb Truax vs. Quinton Quillin, 10, super middle weights; Sergiy Derevyanchenko vs. Jack Calcuty, 12, middleweights; Chris Colbert at Orlando Brones, 10, lightweight.
At Monterrey, Mexico, Jaime Munquiza vs. Romis Hooper, 12, for Munquiza's WBO junior middleweight title; Patrick Teixeira vs. Dornedes Potes, 10, junior middleweight; Diego del Real vs. Enrique Bernache, 10, featherweights.

April 12
At Madison Square Garden, New York, Terence Crawford vs. Amir Khan, 11, for Crawford's WBO welterweight title; Shakur Stevenson vs. Christopher Diaz, 10, featherweight; Ramon Barboza vs. Edis Tatli, 10, lightweight; Felix Verdejo vs. Bryan Vasquez, 10, lightweight.
At Bally's, Las Vegas, Anthony Crollins vs. Carlos Canseco, 11, super middleweight; Danny Garcia vs. Adrian Hernandez, 11, super middleweight; Andy Ruiz Jr. vs. Alexander Dimentikov, 10, heavyweight; Brandon Rios vs. Jeff Horn, 12, for Rios' vacant WBA interim junior featherweight title; Jhonny Perez vs. Cota, 10, middleweights; Alfredo Angulo vs. David Cabrera, 10, super middleweights.

April 24
At Chonburi, Thailand, Wanheeng Menayothin vs. Tatsuya Fukuhara, 12, for Menayothin's WBA supermiddleweight title.
April 26
At The Forum, Inglewood, Calif., Daniel Roman vs. Keith Thurman, 12, for Roman's WBA super bantamweight title and WBA super bantamweight title; Amir Khan vs. Terence Crawford, 11, for Khan's WBA super bantamweight title; Srisaket Sor Rungvisai vs. Juan Francisco Estrada, 12, for Sor Rungvisai's WBA junior bantamweight title; Jessie Vargas vs. Humberto Soto, 10, junior middleweights.

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At The Forum, Inglewood, Calif., Daniel Roman vs. Keith Thurman, 12, for Roman's WBA super bantamweight title and WBA super bantamweight title; Amir Khan vs. Terence Crawford, 11, for Khan's WBA super bantamweight title; Srisaket Sor Rungvisai vs. Juan Francisco Estrada, 12, for Sor Rungvisai's WBA junior bantamweight title; Jessie Vargas vs. Humberto Soto, 10, junior middleweights.

College hockey

NCAA Division I Tournament

NORTHEAST REGIONAL
At Manchester, N.H.
First Round
Friday, March 29
Umass 4, Harvard 0
Notre Dame 2, Clarkson 2, OT
Championship
Saturday, March 30
Umass 4, Notre Dame 2, OT
SOUTH REGIONAL
At Fargo, N.D.
First Round
Friday, March 29
Denver 2, Ohio State 0
Minnesota 2, North Dakota 2
St. Cloud State 1
Championship
Saturday, March 30
Denver 3, American International 0
EAST REGIONAL
At Providence, R.I.
First Round
Friday, March 29
Providence 6, Minnesota State Mankato 3
Cornell 5, Northeastern 1
Championship
Saturday, March 31
Providence 4, Cornell 0
MIDWEST REGIONAL
First Round
Friday, March 29
Minnesota 10, Bowling Green 1, OT
Quinnipiac 2, Arizona State 1, OT
Championship
Saturday, March 31
Minnesota 10, Bowling Green 1, OT
FROZEN FOUR
At Buffalo, N.Y.
First Round
Friday, March 29
Providence 4, UMass 3
UConn 3, Minnesota 3 (30-9)
National Championship
Saturday, April 13
Semifinal winners

Tennis
Monterrey Open
Wednesday
At Club Sonoma
Monterrey, Mexico
Purse: \$275,750 (indoor)
Surface: Hardwood
First Round
Sachia Vijayaratne (6), De. Nao Hibino, Japan, 5-7, 7-6 (5), 6-3
Anastasiya Pavlyuchenkova (3), Russia, 6-4, Ivanovic, Serbia, 6-0, 6-0, 6-0
Second Round
Harriet Dart (10), Austria, 6-3, 6-3
Valeria Savchenko (1), Russia, 6-3, 6-3
Nikola Pietrangeli (1), Romania, 6-4, Gabriela Ruse, Romania, 6-4, Nao Hibino, Japan, 6-4, Desirae Krawczyk (4), United States, 6-4, 7-5, 6-0
Quarterfinals
Giulliana Olmos, Mexico, and Luisa Stefani, Brazil, Paula Kania, Poland, and Yana Sizikova, Russia, 6-1, 6-2
Asia Muhammad and Maria Sanchez, United States, 6-4, Gabriela Ruse, Chile, and Sabrina Santambrogio, United States, 6-2, 6-4
Final
Giulliana Olmos, Mexico, and Luisa Stefani, Brazil, Paula Kania, Poland, and Yana Sizikova, Russia, 6-1, 6-2
Asia Muhammad and Maria Sanchez, United States, 6-4, Gabriela Ruse, Chile, and Sabrina Santambrogio, United States, 6-2, 6-4

Volvo Car Open
Wednesday
At Family Tree Sports Center
Charlotte, S.C.
Purse: \$2,000 (Premier)
Surface: Green Clay-Outdoor
First Round
Jessica Pegula, United States, def. Anastasia Sevastova (4), Latvia, 6-2, 6-2
Taylor Townsend, United States, def. Julia Lohoff, Germany, 6-3, 6-3
Monica Puig, Puerto Rico, def. Sofia Kenin, U.S., 6-3, 6-3
Petra Martić (16), Croatia, def. Mandy Minella, Luxembourg, 6-3, 6-3
Belinda Bencic (1), Switzerland, def. Alieck Kiki, United States, 6-0, 6-3
Daniela Hristova (1), Bulgaria, def. Katerina Kozlov, Ukraine, 3-6, 6-3, 6-3
Francesca Schiavone (12), Italy, def. Lauren Davis, United States, 3-6, 6-2
Alia Tomjanovic (14), Australia, def. Tamara Zvereva (4), Russia, 6-2, 6-2
Kaia Kanepi, Estonia, def. Elise Mertens (2), Belgium, 6-3, 6-2
Maria Sakkari (15), Greece, def. Elena Vesnina (5), Russia, 6-3, 6-3
Jelena Ostapenko (10), Latvia, def. Shelby Rogers, United States, 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7)
Danielle Collins (5), United States, def. Laura Siegemund, Germany, 6-3, 6-2
Caroline Wozniacki (5), Denmark, def. Madison Keys (8), United States, def. Tatjana Maria, Germany, 7-6 (5), 4-6, 6-4

Wednesday
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Deals

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL
MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL — Promoted Matt Bourne to senior vice president/communications.
MLB/MLBA — Announced the resignation of executive vice president of the Baseball Tomorrow Fund Oshley Bradley.
AMERICAN FOOTBALL
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Designated RHP Paul Maholm as a free agent. The Orioles let the contract of RHP Matt Whiting, who was traded to Norfolk (L) and optioned him. RHP Homer Bailey from Scranton.
CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Placed SS Tim Lincecum on the International list. Recalled RHP Jose Ruiz from Charlotte (L).
CLEVELAND INDIANS — Released RHP Ben Taylor. Signed manager Terry Francona to a two-year contract extension.
KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Signed RHP RHP Chris Ellis for assignment. Selected the contract of RHP Homer Bailey from Omaha (PCL).
NEW YORK YANKEES — Reinstated RHP CC Sabathia from the suspended list and placed him on the 10-day IL. Recalled RHP Jonathan Loaisiga from Scranton. Wilkes-Barre (L).
TEXAS RANGERS — Optioned RHP Nick Mauer to Tacoma (PCL). Transferred RHP Hunter Strickland to the 60-day IL. Sent RHP Shawn Armstrong to Tacoma (PCL).
TEXAS RANGERS — Transferred RHP RHP Sadeck to Seattle for RHP Grant Anderson.
TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Recalled OF CHAD GUERREIRO from the 60-day IL. Sent RHP Shawn Armstrong to Tacoma (PCL).
CHICAGO CUBS — Agreed to terms with INF David Berti on a one-year contract for 2020-21.
SAN DIEGO PADRES — Transferred RHP Jacob Nix to the 60-day IL, retroactive to Denver (5-15) vs. Minnesota (30-9-9).
WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Placed SS Jhonny Peralta on the 60-day IL, retroactive to Denver (5-15) vs. Minnesota (30-9-9). SS Adrian Sanchez from Fresno (PCL). Optioned Jake Noll to Fresno.
National Baseball Association
SAN ANTONIO SPRINGERS — Signed G BJ Johnson from Lakeland (NBAFL).

BASEBALL
National Football League
ATLANTA FALCONS — Signed S Khamal Marshall to a one-year contract.
ATLANTA FALCONS — Agreed to terms with G Quinton Spain on a one-year contract.
CHICAGO BEARS — Re-signed LS Patrick Schumacher to a one-year contract.
CHICAGO BEARS — Signed TE/FB Orson Charles to a one-year contract.
CHICAGO BEARS — Signed WR Ryan Grant to a one-year contract.
ILLINOIS AMERICAN FOOTBALL
AFF — Announced it has suspended operations.
HOCKEY
ANHEIM DUCKS — Reassigned C Chase De Leo, RW Kiefer Sherwood and RW Patrick Maroon to the AHL.
ARIZONA COYOTES — Recalled G Adin Hill from Tucson (AHL).
ARIZONA COYOTES — Recalled C Dillon Dubé from Stockton (AHL) on an emergency basis.
COLORADO AVALANCHE — Recalled G Adam Fox from the AHL to Colorado.
OTTAWA SENATORS — Assigned F Brian Luchuk from Belleville (AHL) to Brampton (ECHL).
SAN JOSE SHARKS — Signed G Andrew Shortridge to a one-year contract and assigned him to the AHL. The Sharks' amateur tryout for the remainder of the season.

AMERICAN HOCKEY LEAGUE
BELLEVILLE SENATORS — Recalled D Patrick Maroon from the AHL.
BRIDGEPORT SOUND TIGERS — Assigned G Adam Fox from the AHL to Colorado.
CHICAGO BEARS — Recalled C Dillon Dubé from Stockton (AHL) on an emergency basis.
COLOR

SOCCER

Naeher eying World Cup with usual calm

Teammates say Solo's replacement unflappable; soft-spoken goalkeeper can 'switch it on'

BY ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

When Alyssa Naeher was a college freshman, a senior Penn State teammate told her she couldn't afford to be intimidated.

The U.S. national team goalkeeper still carries the advice that Ali Krieger gave her as she readies for the upcoming World Cup. She's not only undaunted by the opponents she faces, she's ignoring the outside noise that's so often directed at her position.

Naeher has the unenviable task of taking over for Hope Solo, one of the game's best-ever goalkeepers. Solo was in goal when the U.S. won the World Cup four years ago in Canada, though she was dismissed from the team following the 2016 Olympics in Brazil.

Comparisons are inevitable.

"For me, I think the biggest thing is not getting wrapped up in what other people think, what other people say. At the end of the day, I can only control me, control who I am, the type of player I am, the way that I play and the way that I carry myself," she said. "That's the great thing about this sport and the position specifically, is that there is no black and white way to go about it. We're all different and we all bring our own personality and uniqueness to the team and to the position."

Naeher, 30, is known for her calm and steady demeanor. Before games she chills out with crossword puzzles and teammates say she's unflappable — a good trait for a goalkeeper.

She's also soft-spoken, which kind of flies in the face of the need to yell downfield at times at the players in front of her. She laughs and said she shouts when it's needed.

"I think you just kind of switch it on when it comes to games in general. You know, you get in the moment with it. It's a necessity," she said. "It's big part of the position, making saves and keeping the ball out of the back of the net is obviously task number one and is the most important thing for us as goalkeepers, but then all the organization trying to prevent attacks and stuff before they even get to me is almost as important."

Naeher, coming off a shoulder injury that kept her out of the final two games of the recent SheBelieves Cup, is healthy for Thursday's exhibition match



DAVID VINCENT/AP

U.S. goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher throws the ball during an international friendly against France in January. Naeher is known for her calm and steady demeanor. Before games she chills out with crossword puzzles and teammates say she's unflappable — a good trait for a goalkeeper.

against Australia in Colorado, the first of five final friendly matches the U.S. team will play heading into the World Cup, which kicks off June 7 in France.

Naeher is essentially the team's No. 1 in goal heading into the World Cup, with Ashlyn Harris and Adrianna Franch options off the bench. Franch and Harris took turns starting in the SheBelieves Cup in Naeher's absence: Franch earned her first national team start in goal in a 2-2 draw with England, while Harris posted a shutout in a 1-0 victory over Brazil.

But the group as a whole is under greater scrutiny as the defending champions approach the World Cup. The team is 2-1-2 so

far this year, after going 18-0-2 last season. Critics say the national team should have focused more on developing goalkeepers during Solo's reign.

"I want my teammates to feel the utmost confidence with any three of us goalkeepers in goal,"

Harris said. "I think we have an incredible goalkeeper unit. At any moment any of us can step in and have big performances and play in big games and make impacts. And I think that's what we've shown. It's a collective effort every day, we work our tails

off every single day, and one you gets to play and that's difficult."

Naeher, who also plays for the Chicago Red Stars in the National Women's Soccer League, made her debut with the senior national team in 2014. She has 41 appearances with 22 shutouts.

She said she learned her most valuable soccer lesson at Penn State. It came courtesy of Krieger, who was a senior when Naeher was a freshman. Krieger is now a teammate on the national team, called up for the exhibition games against Australia on Thursday and Belgium on Sunday in Los Angeles.

"I was very, very quiet at that time, especially coming in as a freshman. And I felt like, who am I to be telling this All-American senior ahead of me what to do, right?" Naeher said. "And she kind of pulled me aside and was like, 'You have to open your mouth. You're not yelling at me. You're not saying anything. You're not helping me. You're not giving information. We need that. We need that from you. We need that kind of going forward.' To me that was a big kind of a turning point. It was like, 'Oh she wants to hear my voice.' So I've kept that with me."

Naeher and Harris were both included on the roster for the World Cup in Canada, and Naeher was Solo's backup at the 2016 Olympics. Coach Jill Ellis is expected to take three goalkeepers to France.

Naeher is looking at the opportunity this summer with her usual composure.

"I've kind of found over the years that it's best to just keep that even mindset, not too high and not too low," she said. "There's obviously a lot of defensive strategies and changes leading into a game, and within a game. The more that I can kind of just stay in the moment and kind of take it all in, the better position I'll put myself in."

“That’s the great thing about this sport and the position specifically, is that there is no black and white way to go about it. We’re all different and we all bring our own personality and uniqueness to the team and to the position.”

Alyssa Naeher
US women's national team goalie



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

U.S. goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher stops a shot against Japan during a Tournament of Nations match in Carson, Calif. Naeher recalls that as a freshman in college a teammate told her she couldn't afford to be intimidated. The U.S. national team goalkeeper carries that advice as she prepares for the World Cup.

NHL

Around the league

Bolts' Kucherov makes his case

Forward running away with point race, MVP honor

By JOHN WAWRO
Associated Press

Connor McDavid knows better than to risk making end-of-season NHL award projections.

Through no fault of his own, the Edmonton Oilers captain was not included among last year's three MVP candidates, causing a stir back home. So McDavid understandably deferred when recently asked to list his Hart Trophy front-runners this year.

"After last year, I'm not commenting," McDavid said, chuckling. "I have no idea who will win it all."

McDavid, who won the Hart in 2017 after leading the Oilers to their first playoff berth in 11 years, isn't likely to be included among this year's finalists even though he entered the final week of the season second in the league with 115 points. Trouble is, the Oilers have already been eliminated from playoff contention, and McDavid and everyone else are being overshadowed by the numbers Nikita Kucherov is putting up with the President's Trophy-clinching Tampa Bay Lightning.

With 125 points through 80 games, Kucherov has already matched Joe Thornton's league-leading total in 2005-06. The highest total after that is Jaromir Jagr's 127 points in 1998-99, and the last player to top 130 points was Mario Lemieux, who had 161 in 1995-96.

"It's not at all surprising. He was unbelievable last year, and seemed to get no recognition for it," McDavid said, noting how Kucherov finished third in the NHL with 100 points last season. "They're a team that scores a lot of goals. And he's in on most of them. It's pretty impressive."

Kucherov is tied for the Lightning lead with seven game-winning goals and part of a team that became only the NHL's third to win 60 or more games. Kucherov has also led the points race since Dec. 28, and gone no more than two games without registering a point this season.

That's not to say there aren't others worthy of mention.

Calgary's Johnny Gaudreau, with a career-best 97 points already, has played a key role in helping the Flames clinch their first division title in 13 years.

Though Sidney Crosby's production has tailed off with just three assists in Pittsburgh's past nine games, the Penguins could have been in jeopardy of missing the playoffs for the first time since 2006 if not for fourth captain's team-leading 95 points. Chicago's



PAUL SANCTA/AP

Tampa Bay Lightning right wing Nikita Kucherov has 125 points through 80 games.

Patrick Kane, who enjoyed a 20-game point streak, would deserve consideration if not for the Blackhawks sitting last in the Central Division.

Former NHL executive-turned-broadcaster Brian Burke said it's difficult to consider anyone ahead of Kucherov, suggesting he has essentially "lapped the field."

"You'd have to be statistically since an aberration, such a unicorn, that voters would have no choice but to say, 'OK, that's the

guy,'" Burke said.

"But that's not the case where you've got Kucherov. So there's no unicorns," Burke added. "You've already got a guy who's blowing everyone away."

That said, here is The Associated Press list of end-of-season award contenders:

Hart (MVP)

In the conversation: Crosby, Gaudreau, Kucherov and Brad Marchand (Boston).

Who should win: Kucherov.
Comment: To quote Burke: "There's no unicorns."

Norris (Top defenseman)

In the conversation: Brent Burns (San Jose), John Carlson (Washington), Mark Giordano (Calgary), Victor Hedman (Tampa Bay).

Who should win: Giordano.
Comment: A career-best season for a captain on the Pacific Division's top team.

Vezina (Top goalie)

In the conversation: Ben Bishop (Dallas), Darcy Kuemper (Arizona), Carey Price (Montreal), Pekka Rinne (Nashville) and Andrei Vasilevsky (Tampa Bay).

Who should win: Vasilevsky.
Comment: Tightest race to call and could include Islanders' tandem of Robin Lehner and Thomas Greiss, though each eliminate each other by splitting starts.

Selke (Top defensive forward)
In the conversation: Aleksander Barkov (Florida), Patrice Bergeron (Boston), Sean Couturier (Philadelphia), Mark Stone (Vegas), Ryan O'Reilly (St. Louis).

Who should win: Stone.
Comment: Before being traded to Vegas, Stone had an exceptional plus-13 rating on a Senators team that has

currently allowed an NHL-worst 285 goals.

Calder (Top rookie)

In the conversation: Rasmus Dahlin (Buffalo), Andreas Johansson (Toronto), Elias Pettersson (Vancouver) and Brady Tkachuk (Ottawa).

Comment: Pettersson leads rookie forwards in averaging 18:20 of ice time per game.

Jack Adams (Top coach)

In the conversation: Craig Berube (St. Louis), Jon Cooper (Tampa Bay), Bill Peters (Calgary), Barry Trotz (Islanders).

Who should win: Cooper.
Comment: Though Berube and Trotz deserve consideration, it is difficult to overlook the job Cooper's done with a 60-win team.

They said it

Blue Jackets coach John Tortorella wasn't initially in the mood to divulge what was discussed during a team meeting after a 4-1 loss at Edmonton on March 21 that extended Columbus' skid to 0-2-1.

"That's none of your business," he responded. Pressed further, given how Columbus rebounded to win its next five, Tortorella said: "We (stunk) against Edmonton. I mean it was pitiful against Edmonton, so we tried to clean some things up."

Game of the week

The Central Division title and the Western Conference's final playoff berth could be on the line in one of the final games on the regular-season schedule Saturday when Winnipeg travels to face Arizona.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
z-Tampa Bay	80	60	16	4	124	316	218
x-Boston	80	48	23	9	105	253	209
x-Washington	80	47	25	8	102	276	245
x-Toronto	80	45	27	7	99	280	242
x-N.Y. Islanders	80	46	27	7	99	233	195
Pittsburgh	80	45	27	8	99	268	242
Carolina	80	44	29	7	95	238	219
Columbus	80	45	31	4	94	249	228
Montreal	80	43	29	8	94	242	229
Florida	80	36	33	12	84	262	274
Philadelphia	80	37	35	8	82	238	270
N.Y. Rangers	80	32	36	10	78	221	266
Detroit	80	32	38	10	74	225	266
Buffalo	80	31	39	10	72	214	268
New Jersey	80	30	40	10	70	217	269
Ottawa	80	29	45	6	64	238	291

Western Conference

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
z-Calgary	81	50	24	7	107	288	224
x-San Jose	80	46	27	9	97	281	257
x-Winnipeg	80	46	30	4	96	266	239
x-Nashville	80	45	29	6	96	231	210
x-St. Louis	80	43	28	9	95	237	218
x-Vegas	80	43	30	7	93	246	221
x-Chicago	80	42	31	7	91	206	196
Colorado	80	37	29	14	88	255	239

Arizona	80	38	34	8	84	207	218
Minnesota	80	37	34	9	83	231	231
Chicago	80	35	33	12	82	262	286
Vancouver	80	35	35	10	80	221	248
Anaheim	81	34	37	10	78	194	249
Edmonton	80	34	37	9	77	227	270
Los Angeles	80	30	41	9	69	195	256

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top line numbers in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

x-clinched playoff spot
z-clinched conference

Tuesday's games

Nashville 3, Buffalo 2	76
Boston 6, Columbus 2	73
Carolina 4, Toronto 1	71
Montreal 4, Tampa Bay 2	72
Detroit 4, Pittsburgh 1	73
Minnesota 5, Winnipeg 1	74
Dallas 6, Philadelphia 2	75
Colorado 6, Edmonton 2	76
Los Angeles 3, Arizona 1	77
Vancouver 4, San Jose 3	78

Wednesday's games

Ottawa 4, N.Y. Rangers 1	79
Chicago 4, St. Louis 3	80
Anaheim 3, Calgary 1	81
N.Y. Islanders at Florida	82
N.Y. Islanders at Carolina	83
Montreal at Washington	84
Detroit at Pittsburgh	85
Tampa Bay at Toronto	86
Boston at Minnesota	87
Philadelphia at St. Louis	88
Nashville at Nashville	89
Winnipeg at Colorado	90
Edmonton at Edmonton	91
Arizona at Vegas	92

Thursday's games

N.Y. Islanders at Florida	93
N.Y. Islanders at Carolina	94
Montreal at Washington	95
Detroit at Pittsburgh	96
Tampa Bay at Toronto	97
Boston at Minnesota	98
Philadelphia at St. Louis	99
Nashville at Nashville	100
Winnipeg at Colorado	101
Edmonton at Edmonton	102
Arizona at Vegas	103

Friday's games

Columbus at N.Y. Rangers	104
Los Angeles at Anaheim	105
San Jose at Chicago	106
Tampa Bay at Boston	107
Vancouver at St. Louis	108
Buffalo at Detroit	109
N.Y. Rangers at Pittsburgh	110
N.Y. Islanders at Washington	111
Carolina at Philadelphia	112
Carolina at Philadelphia	113
Toronto at Montreal	114
Chicago at Philadelphia	115
Minnesota at Dallas	116
Winnipeg at Arizona	117
Nashville at Colorado	118
Vegas at Los Angeles	119
Colorado at San Jose	120

End regular season

Leaders

Goal scoring	GP	G
Mark Friedman, Washington	77	51
Leon Draisaitl, Edmonton	80	47
John Tavares, New York	80	46
Steven Stamkos, Tampa Bay	80	43
Patrick Kane, Chicago	79	42
Sam Reinhart, Columbus	78	41
Elia DeBrincat, Chicago	80	41
Connor McDavid, Edmonton	78	41
Brayden Point, Tampa Bay	78	41
Nathan Aspinall, Colorado	80	39
Nikita Kucherov, Tampa Bay	80	39
Jake Guentzel, Pittsburgh	73	38
Joe Pavelski, San Jose	73	38
Jeff Skinner, Buffalo	80	38
Auston Matthews, Toronto	80	37
David Pastrnak, Boston	64	37
Johnny Gaudreau, Calgary	81	36
Brad Marchand, Boston	79	36
Mark Scheifele, Winnipeg	80	36

Plus-minus

Name, Team	GP	+/-
Mark Giordano, Calgary	80	36
Ryan McDonagh, Tampa Bay	80	36
Nick Bonino, San Jose	75	35
Brett Peca, Carolina	71	33
Brian Dumoulin, Pittsburgh	78	33
Elias Lindholm, Calgary	80	31
Ron Hainsey, Toronto	80	30
L.J. Brodie, Carolina	78	29
Brayden Point, Tampa Bay	78	28
Touvo Torvaldson, Toronto	78	28
Morgan Rielly, Toronto	80	26
Michael Frodin, Carolina	64	26
Sebastian Ahl, Carolina	80	24
Josh Anderson, Columbus	80	24
Jack Borino, San Jose	73	24
Erik Cernak, Tampa Bay	56	24
Victor Olofinboba, Nashville	78	24
Victor Hedman, Tampa Bay	70	24
Michal Kempny, Washington	71	24



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

The Calgary Flames' Mark Giordano has had a career-best season for a captain on the Pacific Division's top team, and could be the player to take home the Norris Trophy as the league's top defenseman.

NHL/MLB

Jets' Laine now more than scorer

By STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

Patrick Laine tossed sports drinks to his teammates in the locker room and received plenty of barbs in return.

Laine led the Winnipeg Jets with 44 goals last season, but on this day in practice he was on the losing end of a breakaway competition and became the water boy.

"I don't want to waste my goals on a breakaway game," Laine said as he chirped back.

With 30 goals and 50 points in 79 games, Laine hasn't had a bad year offensively even amid long stretches of low production. He has had goal droughts of five, six, 12 and 15 games. But at 20 years old in his third NHL season, the Finnish winger has rounded out his game beyond being a sublime scorer and evolved into the kind of player who could contribute to another long playoff run for Winnipeg.

"I believe Patty is going to be a power forward," coach Paul Maurice said. "He's going to become a very powerful man down low. For sure, what happens is you get these guys came in with this extreme talent and you kind of expect it to bleed into all parts of the game, they should be able to do everything well. Well nobody does at 18, 19 and 20. It takes time for them to build their game."

The second pick in the 2016 draft behind Toronto's Auston Matthews, Laine scored 90 goals in his first two seasons in North America on smaller ice than he was used to, and it looked like it came so easily.

When it suddenly didn't, Laine learned quickly he had to work to compensate in other aspects.

"There's always going to be times when you're not scoring, but still that's not the full game," he said. "There's still 17 minutes you need to play pretty much without the puck. There's obviously those small things that we need to do well as a team that everybody in this locker room appreciates. So you've just got to do those things when you're not scoring and you've got to do that all the times."

Maurice understands the comparisons between Laine and a young Alex Ovechkin. He also knows even the most offensively gifted players struggle early in their careers to figure out how to do other things. Maurice can see progress.

"It's because Patty's played way harder 5-on-5," Maurice said. "No amateur player comes in usually with an offensive bent and has any idea how to play when you have to play to play against the other team's best. They spend some time and then they go, 'OK, the top two lines on every team are completely different in some ways than the bottom two lines, the set of D I've got to play against.' It takes them a while to learn the pace they have to play at."



Pittsburgh Pirates first baseman Josh Bell is hoping to get his power numbers back to where they were in 2017, when he hit 26 homers and was third in the voting for NL Rookie of the Year.

Pirates' Bell seeks to answer critics with more home runs

By WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Josh Bell didn't read the criticism from an anonymous scout in a national magazine last month, the one that labeled the Pittsburgh Pirates first baseman as a player with "five o'clock power," someone who could put on a show during batting practice only to have all that muscle vanish once the lights came on and pitches started to count.

While Bell appreciated Pittsburgh general manager Neil Huntington mounting a spirited defense of Bell in response, he also is aware the critique did not come out of nowhere. When your home run total drops in half from one season to the next, particularly at a position where the ability to send the ball to the outer reaches of the park is essentially a job requirement, there's plenty to criticize.

No one knows better than Bell that the 12 home runs he put up in 2018 — a massive drop-off from the 26 he hit while finishing third in NL Rookie of the Year voting in 2017 — won't do for a team that needs an uptick in offensive production if it wants to be a factor in the wide-open NL Central.

"I feel like with last year's track record, yeah, it was pretty bad," Bell said. "There's nothing I can do about it now."

The Pirates certainly aren't concerned.

"He's just has to be himself," leftfielder Corey Dickerson said. "He doesn't have to be 'home run guy.'"

Manager Clint Hurdle is committed to keeping Bell in the cleanup spot. Hurdle pulled the cerebral and diligent 26-year-

By the numbers

26

Home runs in 2017 for Pittsburgh's Josh Bell in 549 at-bats.

12

Home runs last season for Bell in 501 at-bats.

0

Homers this season through 14 at-bats for Bell.

SOURCE: MLB.com

old aside last season and told him what he expected from Bell at the plate, namely being patient and thoughtful in his approach. That message hasn't changed.

"I feel like the trust is there," Bell said. "He's seen me during those stretches where I'm really doing damage series after series."

Even if those instances were far more sporadic last summer than they were during his first full season in the majors in 2017. While Bell's batting average and on-base percentage both ticked up in 2018, his runs batted in total

fell from 90 to 62. He finished strong — with four home runs and a .265 average in September as the Pirates surged to just their fourth winning season in a quarter-century. He spent a significant part of the offseason working out in California and reflecting on what he's learned through two-plus seasons.

The lessons included an awareness that he'd fallen into a familiar trap. Too often he'd focus on hitting home runs instead of solid contact. In a way, he was getting it backwards. At 6-foot-4 and 240 pounds, he understands he doesn't necessarily have to swing hard to get results.

"If I'm driving the ball all over the ballpark, with my levers, the ball is going to fly," he said. "If I try and force ball into the seats, these guys are throwing too good, they're throwing too hard. The ball is going to be on the ground."

While Bell had just two hits — both singles — through Pittsburgh's first three games, there were promising signs. He drove in a run in a victory over Cincinnati on Sunday by lining a single back up the middle to score Starling Marte. He went 0-for-2 in a 6-5 loss to St. Louis in the Pirates' home opener but displayed some solid situational awareness.

With runners on second and third and one out in the first inning, he made solid contact off Cardinals starter Adam Wainwright and while his sharp grounder to second turned into an out, it also allowed Adam Frazier to score easily. In nearly the same spot in the fourth inning — this time with runners on second and third with no outs — his sacrifice fly to center field pushed Pittsburgh's lead to 3-0.

MLB scoreboard

American League

East Division		Pct	GB
W	L		
Tampa Bay	5 2	.714	—
Baltimore	4 2	.667	½
Toronto	3 3	.429	2
New York	2 4	.333	2½
Boston	2 4	.286	3
Central Division		Pct	GB
W	L		
Minnesota	4 1	.800	—
Detroit	4 3	.571	1
Chicago	2 3	.400	2
Cleveland	2 3	.400	2
Kansas City	2 3	.400	2
West Division		Pct	GB
W	L		
Seattle	7 2	.775	—
Texas	5 2	.667	2
Oakland	4 3	.556	2½
Houston	2 5	.286	4½
Los Angeles	2 5	.286	5

National League

East Division		Pct	GB
W	L		
New York	5 1	.833	—
Philadelphia	4 2	.667	½
Atlanta	2 3	.400	2½
Washington	2 3	.400	2½
Miami	2 5	.286	3½
Central Division		Pct	GB
W	L		
Milwaukee	6 1	.857	—
St. Louis	3 3	.500	2½
Pittsburgh	2 3	.400	3½
Chicago	1 4	.200	4
Cincinnati	2 5	.286	4½
West Division		Pct	GB
W	L		
Los Angeles	5 2	.714	—
San Diego	4 3	.571	1
Arizona	3 4	.429	2
Colorado	3 4	.429	2
San Francisco	2 5	.286	3

Wednesday's games:
Chicago White Sox 8, Cleveland 3
Colorado 1, Tampa Bay 0, 11 innings
Minnesota 7, Kansas City 1
Detroit 2, N.Y. Yankees 1
Toronto 5, Baltimore 3
Texas 4, Houston 0
Boston 6, Oakland 1
Milwaukee 1, Cincinnati 0
St. Louis 5, Philadelphia 8
San Diego 4, Arizona 1
N.Y. Mets 5, Miami 4
St. Louis 5, Pittsburgh 4, 10 innings
Atlanta 6, Chicago Cubs 4
L.A. Dodgers 5, San Francisco 3

Thursday's games:
Seattle at Chicago White Sox, ppd.
N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore
Boston at Oakland
Toronto at Cleveland
Los Angeles at N.Y. Mets
San Diego at St. Louis, ppd.
Washington at N.Y. Mets
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh
Chicago Cubs at Atlanta

Friday's games:
Seattle (Klutch 0-1) at Chicago White Sox (Lopez 0-1)
Tampa Bay (Glasnow 1-0) at San Francisco (Lincecum 0-1)
Minnesota (Gorodtsov 0-0) at Philadelphia (Mota 0-1)
Boston (Porcello 0-1) at Arizona (Godley 0-1)
Toronto (Thornton 0-0) at Cleveland (Bieber 0-0)
Washington (Montas 1-0) at Houston (McHugh 0-1)
Texas (Lynn 0-0) at L.A. Angels (Pena 0-1)
L.A. Dodgers (Maeda 1-0) at Colorado (Anderson 0-1)
San Diego (Marguez 0-1) at St. Louis (Flaherty 0-0)
Cincinnati (Gray 0-1) at Pittsburgh (Goswami 0-0)
Miami (Lopez 1-0) at Atlanta (Gausman 0-0)
Chicago Cubs (Quintana 0-0) at Milwaukee (Woodruff 1-0)

Saturday's games:
Washington at N.Y. Mets
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh
Minnesota at Philadelphia
San Diego at St. Louis
Miami at San Francisco
Chicago Cubs at Milwaukee
Atlanta at Arizona
Boston at Arizona
L.A. Dodgers at Colorado

NL leaders

Batting Average	R	H	Pct.
Albies Atl	5	18	3 500
Harper Phil	5	16	5 850
Wright StL	21	70	4 475
W.Ramos NYM	6	19	5 474
Brendon Wss	2	22	5 469
D'Arreitia Ari	7	13	7 155
Bellind Atl	6	22	6 935
K.Hernandez LAD	6	23	7 103
Contreras CHC	14	4	6 429

Home Runs
Bellingor, Los Angeles, 5; Velich, Milwaukee, 4; Goldschmidt, St. Louis, 4.

AL leaders

Batting Average	GAB	R	H	Pct.
CSantana Cle	5	17	3	8 471
Medica CHW	5	20	9	450
LeMahieu NYY	5	16	4	7 438
Mancini Bal	6	24	10	6 411
Morales Sea	2	22	5	4 475
Tbeckham Sea	8	19	11	3 779
Bellind Atl	6	22	6	9 375
LGarcia CHW	4	19	6	7 368

Home Runs
Kdavis, Oakland, 5; Acabarra, Texas, 3; MChapman, Oakland, 3; Tbeckham, Seattle, 3; Brantley, 3; Cantanti, Seattle, 3; Mancini, Baltimore, 3; Grichuk, Toronto, 3.

GOLF



Eric Gax/AP

Sergio Garcia, second from left, and Matt Kuchar, right, discuss on the eighth hole what had happened on the seventh green during the Dell Technologies Match Play Championship on Saturday in Austin, Texas. Garcia had an 8-foot putt to win the seventh hole and left it 4 inches short, a frustrating miss. Such a tap-in typically is conceded, and the Spaniard walked up and casually rapped it left-handed. The ball spun around the cup, and he picked it up and walked off the green, assuming he remained 1 down through seven holes. One problem: Matt Kuchar never formally conceded the putt.

Masters perfect time to forget squabbles

Peaceful Augusta offers chance to take attention off contentious moments of season

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

The Masters can't get here soon enough.

Not because Tiger Woods is only six months removed from a victory in Georgia (East Lake) as he tries to end 11 years without a major and 14 years since he last won a green jacket. Or because Rory McIlroy won The Players Championship, hasn't finished out of the top 10 in all seven of his tournaments this year and is poised for maybe his best shot at completing the career Grand Slam.

There's nothing like the soothing sights and ground-shaking sounds at Augusta National to get minds off far too many contentious moments this year.

The opening act to the golf season has not been dull, just not always for the right reasons.

More than "Who won what?" too much attention has been on "They did what?"

Perhaps it was only fitting that two players under the most scrutiny this year — Sergio Garcia and Matt Kuchar — shared the stage at the Match Play in a quarterfinal meeting that jokingly was dubbed the "Apology Match."

Garcia had been accused for damaging five greens in the third round of the Saudi International, which led to disqualification and most likely would have led to suspen-

sion on any other tour. What might have spared Garcia is that he played so early and was so far off the lead there were no cameras.

Kuchar finally got around to apologizing — and paying — after word got out that he gave the local Mexican caddy he hired for the week \$5,000 from the \$1,296,000 that Kuchar received for winning the Mayakoba Classic.

"That's not a story," Kuchar said tersely in January, except that it became one in February. Kuchar eventually paid the caddy \$50,000 and apologized for being stubborn.

There was no hint of history between Garcia and Kuchar until an awkward moment on the seventh green Saturday at Austin Country Club. Garcia had a 7-foot putt to win the hole, narrowly missed it and angrily reached out to backhand it into the cup, except that it swirled around the cup.

Such a putt — lasers measured it at 4 inches — are accepted universally as good. Garcia reacted so quickly he never bothered to look up at Kuchar, which was his mistake. Kuchar, even if he was looking, could have walked to the next tee and it would be understood that the putt was good.

Once the match referee became involved — the circumstances that led to Kuchar talking to the referee are unclear — there was no turning back. Shots can't be conceded after they have been hit. Kuchar said he

didn't want to win the hole that way. Garcia suggested he could concede the next hole. Kuchar didn't like that option.

As one high-ranking official versed in all the proper golf terminology observed, "The whole thing sucks."

There were no winners in this one, except for Kuchar winning the match, which he might have done, anyway. Making it worse was a short video they made Monday to say it was much ado about nothing. It would have been more plausible if Kuchar hadn't changed his story.

Kuchar said Saturday at a news conference: "He knew he made a mistake. I said I didn't want that to be how a hole was won or lost. And he said, 'Well, you can concede a hole.' I'm not sure I'm ready to concede a hole."

Kuchar said in the Instagram video Monday that Sergio "never said to give me a hole."

They should have stolen a page from New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick: Onto Augusta.

Maybe by then, players who consider themselves athletes will have learned the art of bending over a few inches to drop a golf ball at knee level.

The new Rules of Golf, a seven-year project to make them simple, received far too much attention for the wrong reasons. The idea behind a knee-high drop (instead of shoulder level) was to get the ball in play more quickly. One reason the play-

ers didn't like it is that it looked dumb. It reached a point at the Honda Classic that Rickie Fowler jokingly stooped and held the ball behind him under his legs, a different kind of "dropping."

It looked bad, especially because Fowler said the previous week that the rules were not doing "any favors for our sport" after he forgot to drop from knee level (following a shank that went out of bounds).

That's not to say there haven't been problems with the new rules, particularly with caddies standing behind their players. Justin Thomas spoke the loudest and was heard, and the rule was clarified overnight. But when Thomas brought up another situation involving caddy alignment at the Honda Classic, someone at the USGA lost his cool and tweeted that Thomas had canceled every meeting with the USGA and said to "call us."

This time, it was the USGA apologizing because Thomas didn't cancel any meeting.

In nearly every case involving the rules, PGA Tour players were quick to blame the USGA, even though every major golf organization — including their own — was part of the process. It was a reminder how much goodwill the USGA has lost in recent years, whether it was the ban on the stroke used for long putters or U.S. Opens that didn't get to play.

That's one problem that might be forgotten at the Masters but won't go away just yet.

WOMEN'S NCAA TOURNAMENT

Oregon lone newbie among past champs

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
Associated Press

Oregon and coach Kelly Graves are going into the Final Four as the only newcomers, surrounded by three other women's teams that have won multiple national championships.

"Obviously we're a little bit different," Graves said Tuesday. "But those programs and those coaches had to win their first, as well get to their first Final Four. It's a new experience for us."

Though not totally unexpected for the Ducks (33-4), who have won back-to-back Pac-12 regular-season championships and went to the Elite Eight each of the past two seasons.

"I know one of the focuses this year was to get here to a Final Four," said Graves, in his fifth year at Oregon after 14 seasons at Gonzaga. "We didn't want to be an Elite Eight program, we wanted to be a Final Four program. I know our players were hungry and really determined to get there. Now that it's here, we're certainly excited."

Led by junior All-American guard Sabrina Ionescu, the Ducks play their first Final Four game Friday against No. 1 overall seed Baylor (35-1).

In the other Final Four game Friday in Tampa, defending national champion Notre Dame and UConn meet in a national semifinal or championship game for the seventh time since 2011.

"I know we're the No. 1 overall seed, but I'm not sure we're the hunted. I think we're one of four teams that can win it all," Baylor coach Kim Mulkey said. "We happen to be the overall No. 1 seed probably because of the timing of how losses happened late in the year. But we're just happy to get there, to bring players who have never been there, and realize Oregon is an unbelievably talented team."



CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

Oregon head coach Kelly Graves works with forward Ruthy Hebard during practice Thursday at the women's Final Four in Tampa, Fla. Oregon faces Baylor in a national semifinal on Friday.

The Lady Bears are back in the Final Four for the first time since completing a 40-0 season in 2012, when they won their second national title.

With big posts Kalani Brown (6-foot-7 senior) and Lauren Cox (6-4 junior), Baylor has won 27 consecutive games since their only loss, at Pac-12 runner-up Stanford before Christmas.

"That game was not going to define our season or how good we were really, but it would give us a little bit of just kind of what we need to work on," said Mulkey, in her fourth Final Four in 19 seasons as Baylor's head coach after she won national titles as a player and assistant coach at Louisiana Tech.

If Oregon wins the semifinal game, the Ducks would play one of the teams that ended their past two seasons. The Ducks lost 90-52 to UConn after making their first Elite Eight in 2017, then fell 84-74 to Notre Dame last year when they made another regional final.

"The first year against UConn, they destroyed us. We really played no good quarters in that game. We weren't quite ready for that stage," Graves said. "We got a little bit better last year."

This is the 12th consecutive Final Four for the Huskies (35-2), who won six of their record 11 national titles in that span. But this appearance seems to feel a bit different since their most recent championship was in 2016, when they won their fourth in a row. "It's odd in a lot of ways. It's odd because what would be viewed as a magical season at every single school in America except ours," coach Geno Auriemma said. "It's the most bizarre thing I've ever experienced."

UConn had multiple regular-season losses for the first time since 2012-13, the season that started its four consecutive titles. The Huskies had won 126 regular-season games in a row until a 68-57 loss at Baylor in January, a month after a 19-point win at Notre Dame. They also lost at Louisville, but avenged that loss by beating the No. 1 seed in the Albany Regional final.

Before last year's title for the Fighting Irish (34-3), when they won their last two games on last-second shots by Arique Obanowale, they had missed the Final Four two years in a row. That came after a streak of five consecutive Final Fours when Notre Dame was the national runner-up four times. Its other national championship was in 2001.

"I think we're confident, but I don't think you ever can look and say, 'We did it before. We can do it again.' But you know how tough it's going to be," coach Muffet McGraw said.

"We won each game by a basket. It wasn't as if we were just intimidating everyone. I think going into this one, it's different."



RAY CARLIN/AP

Baylor head coach Kim Mulkey reacts in front of the bench to a blocked shot against Connecticut in January. These Lady Bears certainly know how to win, and they're having fun all the way to their first Women's NCAA Final Four since 2012.

Laughing all the way

Top overall seed Baylor enjoying the journey to Final Four

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
Associated Press

There are times when Kim Mulkey — an intense, championship-winning point guard who is just as intense as a coach — will be challenging her Baylor players or getting on them about something when one of the young guards suddenly lightens the mood in the locker room.

"In the middle of it, DiDi (Richards) will go, 'You tell 'em, Mulkey.' You know, she's got that little voice," Mulkey said. "She just cracks everybody up."

These Lady Bears certainly know how to win, and they are having fun all the way to their first Final Four since 2012. Baylor (35-1), the No. 1 overall seed, takes a 27-game winning streak into its game against national semifinal first-timer Oregon (33-4) on Friday night in Tampa, Fla. "This is who they are. They're funny in the heat of the moment. They'll say funny stuff to each other. They relax me," Mulkey said. "They're just easy to coach."

After wearing bracelets all season with #TTT for Together To Tampa, now they have a chance to take the title.

"Everybody has been so focused all year. We're focused on this one goal and we finally got there," said junior 6-foot-4 post Lauren Cox, selected as the most outstanding player of the Greensboro Regional. "Now we're focused on winning the whole thing."

While this is the first Final Four trip for any of the current Baylor players, including standout 6-7 se-

nior post Kalani Brown and graduate transfer point guard Chloe Jackson, Mulkey is going for the 14th time — her fourth in 19 seasons as Baylor's head coach.

"For these players that you take, they've never done it," Mulkey said. "It's fun to watch them. It's fun to watch their expressions, their excitement. That's what makes it fun for me now as a coach."

Mulkey was part of the first three women's NCAA Tournaments from 1982-84 playing at Louisiana Tech, including the initial NCAA title in 1982 after the Lady Techsters won the 1981 AIAA national championship her freshman season. There were seven more Final Fours, and another title, during 15 seasons as an assistant coach on Leon Barmon's staff at her alma mater.

The Lady Bears were coming off a 20-loss season and had never been to the NCAA Tournament when Mulkey arrived in Waco, Texas. They have since made 18 NCAA appearances, been to 11 consecutive Sweet 16s, won 10 Big 12 titles in a row and are now going for their third national championship.

Baylor went into this season with Brown and Cox, the top two scorers and rebounders, but was unsettled in the frontcourt. Point guard Kristy Wallace had finished her career and returning sophomore Alexis Morris, expected to fill that role like she did in last year's NCAA Tournament when Wallace was hurt, was dismissed from the team in September for violating team rules.

Jackson, Baylor's first-ever grad transfer when she left LSU hoping for a title chance, made the

transition from shooting guard to the point while junior Juicy Landrum became a reliable shooter, making 40 percent of her three-pointers. Richards is a defensive stopper and there are times five freshmen have played together.

And they all like each other on and off the court, something Mulkey noticed early.

"What I didn't see is could they sustain it or is this real, is this truly who they are, or do they work it, having good team chemistry," Mulkey said.

Baylor's only loss was at Pac-12 runner-up Stanford in its last game before Christmas. The Lady Bears ended then-No. 1 UConn's 126-game winning streak in the regular season in their first game after New Year's, then swept through the Big 12 regular season and conference tournament.

"I feel like our team, and our chemistry is something that, you know, is shown because of how much we have each other's back," Richards said.

There was a giggle-filled post-game news conference, led by Richards, after they won their tournament opener at home against Abilene Christian.

Brown and Cox hugged Mulkey together when they came out of Baylor's win over Iowa in the Greensboro Regional final — Brown didn't lift her coach in the air like she did at the end of the Big 12 Tournament. The post players then hugged each other and sat at the end of the bench with huge smiles on their faces.

"They have a very fun, uniquely lively personality as a group," Mulkey said.

NCAA TOURNAMENT

Spartans' Winston eyes elite status

By LARRY LAGE
Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Cassius Winston is already in elite company.

The crafty point guard is among a handful of Michigan State players to win Big Ten player of the year honors and earn a spot on The Associated Press All-American team. And if he can help the Spartans win two more games, he will also join Magic Johnson and Mateen Cleaves as the school's national championship-winning point guards.

"There's room at the table for Cassius and I'll even pull the chair out for him personally," Cleaves told the AP on Wednesday, 19 years after he led Michigan State to its second national title.

"I'm excited for him and I think he deserves it. Having won it, I know how it feels and it gets even better as you get older. No matter what, no one can take that away from you and you're a staple in college basketball for the rest of your life."

The second-seeded Spartans will play third-seeded Texas Tech on Saturday night in the Final Four, hoping to advance and face Virginia or Auburn in the title game.

Johnson, a Hall of Famer, lifted the Spartans to a national championship in 1979 and Cleaves did in 2000. Winston acknowledged it would mean a lot to him to join the duo in Michigan State lore.

"Those are the greats, definitely, got to be top two," he said. "So just to be up there with those guys, to get a national championship for this program, that's something you can't replace."

The Spartans went into the season needing to replace Miles Bridges and Jaren Jackson after they entered the NBA Draft as underclassmen. Michigan State also bid farewell to a trio of role-playing seniors.

Then they lost Joshua Langford in December to a season-ending ankle injury, Nick Ward for a stretch of games late in the season with a broken hand and Kyle Ahrens was in and out of the lineup with a back injury before hurting his left ankle in the Big Ten Tournament.

Craigh Tom Izzo, his staff and the team overcame the setbacks.

It may have been impossible to overcome the loss of Winston.

He is averaging 37.5 minutes during the NCAA Tournament. Winston was the Most Outstanding Player in the East Region after averaging 19 points and 7.8 assists, including a 20-point, 10-assist performance in a win over top-seeded Duke. He was the only Division I basketball player this season to average 18 or more points per game, at least seven assists and shoot at least 40% from the three-point line.

While in the 1992-93 season, Winston is one of just six players from

the top six conferences to average at least 18 points and seven assists. The short list includes players such as former Michigan State star Denzel Valentine, Trae Young at Oklahoma last year and Damon Stoudamire more than two decades ago at Arizona.

Winston's success is not surprising to those who watched him grow up in the Motor City, playing with and against top competition at University of Detroit Jesuit and for The Family on the AAU circuit.

Don't be fooled by his 6-foot-1, 185-pound frame.

"If you just look at his body, you would never think he's as physical as he is," said Brandon Boe Neely, who coached Winston from age 7 through high school for The Family. "I had three refs in three states one year tell me they've never seen a kid that physical after he got hit so hard kids were knocking his headbump off."

Winston has worn a headband since he was in the second grade and his dad traces the tradition to his son's affection for former NBA player Paul Pierce.

He creates space with slick ball-handling, changing speeds and using angles he sees before his opponents. He sets them up for an array of jumpers, floaters runners and passes.

The toughest test of his career might be up next: The Red Raiders are one of the best defensive teams.

Just four other Spartans have done what Winston has already done, being selected as an All-America and Big Ten player of the year since the conference created the award after Johnson's college career: Shawn Respert, Cleaves, Dwyane Green and Valentine.

The truly coveted guard, though, includes just Johnson and Cleaves.

"Cassius has done enough to set himself in that same footprint with those guys," Izzo said.



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

Michigan State's Cassius Winston hopes to add a national title to his All-America and Big Ten player of the year awards.



JAC C. HONG/AP

Gonzaga's Zach Norvell Jr. shoots between Texas Tech guards Jarrett Culver, left, and Matt Mooney during the West Region final. The two guards have helped lead the Red Raiders into the Final Four.

Guards Culver, Mooney lead Raiders into first Final Four

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
Associated Press

Hometown standout Jarrett Culver was the first recruit Chris Beard reached out to when he got to Lubbock as Texas Tech's head coach three years ago.

Then, when the Red Raiders were coming off their first NCAA Elite Eight appearance last season and had to replace a senior All-Big 12 point guard, they targeted Matt Mooney, a graduate transfer from South Dakota who began his college career at Air Force after accepting his only Division I offer.

The two guards who got to the Big 12 school in the plains of West Texas in distinctly different ways have helped lead Texas Tech (30-6) to the Final Four.

"Hard work pays off. For believers, you reap what you sow," Mooney said. "They didn't pick us to win the Big 12 or to be here right now, but we keep believing in each other, and we're going to keep doing it."

At one point last weekend, before the Red Raiders beat top seed Gonzaga in the West Regional final, Beard asked Culver if the sophomore was having fun.

When Culver responded "Yes, sir," Beard drew laughter in the room when he told the Big 12 player of the year and second-team AP All-American: "We should do this again next year together." The 6-foot-6 Culver, Tech's leading scorer and rebounder at 18.9 points and 6.4 rebounds a game, is expected to be a high pick in this year's NBA Draft. But first comes Texas Tech's first Final Four game Saturday night in Minneapolis against Michigan State (32-6). And then maybe, just maybe, a trip to the title game.



**Michigan State (32-6)
vs. Texas Tech (30-6)**
AFN-Sports
2:30 a.m. Sunday CET
9:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

Even though he grew up close to the Texas Tech campus, Culver dreamed of "going other places, bigger places" to play college basketball. He went to only a few Red Raiders games, but Beard told him during a long recruiting process that he could make a legacy in his hometown.

Culver has now been a part of Texas Tech's two deepest runs in the NCAA Tournament. Before last season, the Red Raiders had never been to the Elite Eight and their last Sweet 16 had been in 2005, when the guard was only 6 years old and Beard was an assistant coach there for Bob Knight.

Beard has seen a different level of maturity this season in Culver, a kid who has always loved the game and put in the work. Instead of just shooting in the gym for a couple of hours, he now does calculated work.

"Specifically, I think he's become a better defensive player. And on offense, he's just a much better passer," Beard said. "I think as a freshman, he was a confident scorer, a young great player. Now he's a legitimate guy that can beat you with the pass or the shot, and so I think he's just developed."

Not only has he increased his

scoring and rebounding averages (11.2 ppg, 4.8 rpg as a freshman), Culver has nearly two more assists per game (from 1.8 to 3.7 as a sophomore).

Mooney had a lot more schools interested in him when the 6-3 guard decided to leave South Dakota after two seasons. He started all 68 of his games with the Coyotes, averaging 18.7 points and making 36 percent of his three-pointers.

With All-Big 12 guard Keenan Evans among five seniors gone after last season, along with high-soaring freshman forward Zhair Smith, the Red Raiders got older again with two grad transfers who became full-time starters — Mooney and 6-10 post Tariq Owens from St. John's.

It didn't take long for the older newcomers to blend in with their new team.

"For me, it's just proving yourself all over again to a new group of guys, your teammates and your coaches," said Mooney, who has averaged 11.0 points and made 38 percent of his threes while starting every game.

Mooney also earned a new nickname for his approach to the game and his competitiveness.

"He overthinks things. He's a perfectionist. The great thing about him is he is detailed-oriented and he's got a little bit of stubbornness to him. He thinks he's the best player in the country but all the great ones do," Beard said. "On the flip side, it can get annoying from time to time. So [guard Davide Moretti] gave him the nickname professor. All right, Professor. You're right on everything. Those guys have a special relationship."

And a special season.

NCAA TOURNAMENT

Final Four stadium poses light problem

By DAVE CAMPBELL
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The losses last weekend by Duke, Gonzaga, Kentucky and Purdue pulled the curtains on their seasons, one painful game short of the Final Four.

Those teams that made it to Minneapolis? The guys from Michigan State, Texas Tech, Auburn and Virginia will be greeted, literally, by giant drapes inside the building where the 2019 champion will be determined.

Yes, the bigger and fancier the site, the more complicated the conversion. From the extra speakers to the special center-hung scoreboard to the temporary blinds at U.S. Bank Stadium, turning a football-sized venue into a basketball-friendly facility has become quite the project.

That's fitting, of course, because the Final Four has become quite the event.

"People have said, 'It's a game for an arena,' but trying to go back at this point on the opportunities? Instead of giving approximately 5,000 tickets to each school, they'd be receiving far less than that, and then you've got all of the membership, the other schools that want access and the general public," said L.J. Wright, the NCAA's director of men's basketball championships. "The demand is still here, and so we want to expose and help grow the game through that exposure."

When the NCAA first began using an "in-the-round" seating configuration at Ford Field in Detroit in 2009, where the court is placed on the middle of the turf instead of in one of the corners and the entire bowl is used, the minimum-capacity requirement for the Final Four was raised to 60,000 seats.

That whittled the candidate pool to the 10 climate-controlled NFL-level venues, which had been sprinkled into the rotation throughout the 1980s and 1990s until the last NBA-sized host was used in East Rutherford, N.J., in 1996. There are currently only 10 covered stadiums big enough in the entire country to bid.

Nestled into a compact downtown, filled with state-of-the-art amenities and fresh from holding the Super Bowl 14 months ago, U.S. Bank Stadium fits the bill. The not-quite-3-year-old facility's defining feature, though, created an additional challenge for the host. The skyline-facing front of the building is essentially one big picture window, including five of the world's largest pivoting glass doors ranging from 75 to 95 feet high. Then there is the roof, about 60% of which is composed of a lightweight, translucent plastic called ETFE.

Even on some of the coldest afternoons, like the 2-degree outside temperature at kickoff of the Super Bowl, enough sunlight can stream in to make a television do a double take and wonder for a second if the game is

actually being played in Arizona or Florida.

"That's what makes this building unique. That's what makes it beautiful. That's what really makes it the gold standard in the NFL. Unfortunately, that is also what makes it very complex for us," said Patrick Talty, the general manager for stadium operator SMG. "Because of that competitive nature, needing the light to be the same for all teams in all situations, we then have to take our biggest asset away."

To keep the glare off the TV cameras and out of the eyes of the free-throw shooters, a darkening plan is mandated for each bidding venue. There is no issue for many of them, but at U.S. Bank Stadium, this sleek, steep and ship-shaped \$1.1 billion home of the Minnesota Vikings, there is 460,000 square feet to cover.

The \$4.6 million project, covered by the building's capital improvement fund, was so big the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority split it between two manufacturers: theater-style curtains for the front and sailboat-like textile for the roof. Just one of the custom-made ceiling darkening panels is 10 feet wide and up to 370 feet long.

The cost of the blinds and the altering of the building's identity have prompted some complaints from the public, but the blinds will be reused for concerts and conventions and are expected to last for the life of the stadium, MSFA chairman Michael Vekich said.

For now, the fabric will help transform the colossal structure into an environment as close to an on-campus arena as possible, if that's possible for an event that has averaged about 72,800 fans in attendance over the last 10 years. Putting 600 students from each school in 540 floor seats behind each basket was one way the NCAA has tried to increase the energy, along with subtly amplified noise for seats that are the farthest from the court.



RENÉE JONES SCHNEIDER, STAR TRIBUNE/AP

Part of the roof is darkened Tuesday with curtains as U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis prepares for the Final Four, which begins Saturday.



ORLIN WAGNER/AP

Auburn's Jared Harper had 26 points, including 17 in overtime, to lead Auburn to a 77-71 upset of Kentucky in the Midwest Region final of the NCAA Tournament on Sunday.

Undersized and overlooked, Auburn's Harper over delivers

By JOHN ZENOR
Associated Press

AUBURN, Ala. — Jared Harper might just epitomize this Auburn basketball team: overlooked, undersized and playing about as well as anybody.

The Tigers' 5-foot-11 point guard has been a driving force in their surprising run to their first Final Four. He has supplied clutch plays, especially against Kentucky, blink-and-you-miss-it drives and three-pointers.

Now, Harper and Auburn face top-seeded Virginia on Saturday in Minneapolis. The diminutive junior is coming off the biggest performance of his career, a 26-point, five-assist, four-rebound, three-steal stat sheet stuffer against the Wildcats.

"I can only speak for Jared, and just tell you that size does matter, but it's never been a factor for him," Auburn coach Bruce Pearl said. "He uses speed and quickness to be able to define his game. I've seen him in many major moments and the moments haven't been too big for him."

Or for Auburn, so far.

Harper scored the final points of regulation on a scooping layup against Kentucky, then added 12 of Auburn's 17 overtime points en route to a 77-71 upset.

That performance now has a program that ended a 15-year NCAA Tournament drought a year ago only two wins away from a national title — which is pretty much like Harper predicted when the high school teammate of Cleveland Cavaliers guard Collin Sexton arrived at Auburn as the point guard Pearl badly needed.

"When he first came to Auburn, he said he wanted to have an ESPN 30 for 30' story on how he led Auburn to a championship and brought them back," said Patrick Harper, his father and a high school coach. "I said, 'Yeah, right. We're not that good.'"

"He had that vision. I still remind him that he said it and



Auburn (30-9)
vs. Virginia (33-3)
AFN-Sports
Midnight, Saturday CET
7 a.m. Sunday JKT

he believed it. He set the goals high."

Harper has been a centerpiece of Auburn's rebuild, along with sharp-shooting guard Bryce Brown and versatile forward Chuma Okeke, who tore the ACL in his left knee in the Sweet 16 against North Carolina. Six-foot-11 center Austin Wiley dealt with injuries this season and mostly comes off the bench for limited minutes.

Harper, meanwhile, has started 103 games over the past three years, and his numbers have climbed across the board every year.

"I wouldn't have thought that they were a Final Four-type team until I realized how good the point guard was," said former Auburn coach and current radio color commentator Sonny Smith.

The NCAA Tournament has thrust Harper — and the Tigers — onto the national stage. His huge game against Kentucky helped Auburn overcome the emotional loss of Okeke.

He demurred on taking too much credit after that game, citing the play of teammates like Samir Doughty and Brown.

"That gives me confidence going into overtime to be able to make those plays because I have the same confidence in them to make plays," Harper said.

Spoken like a true point guard. He has more than held his own in three straight games against

teams with point guards who were five-star recruits, according to the 247Sports composite ranking of the major recruiting sites.

Kentucky has Ashton Hagans, North Carolina has Coby White and Kansas has Devon Dotson. And Auburn is perfectly happy with Harper, who wasn't quite blue-chip enough to get recruited by any of those blue bloods.

Harper wasn't a finalist for the Bob Cousy Award given to the nation's top point guard, and he wasn't among the eight players whom Southeastern Conference coaches picked for the all-conference team. Neither was Brown or Okeke, for that matter.

Pearl doesn't think Harper's play is driven by feeling overlooked or underrated.

"I don't think he does play (ticked) off or with much of an edge," the coach said. "I think it's because he's always played that way. He's always been overlooked. So, he just goes about his business and it'll be like that in the NBA for him."

"There are 30 teams in the league, and most of them won't want an undersized point guard, but there will be a couple that are smart enough that will. He'll make his way onto one of those rosters, and then they'll see the value."

Auburn already understands Harper's value.

He is averaging 15.4 points per game and is tied for the SEC lead with 5.8 assists per game. He is third in free-throw percentage and fourth in both three-pointers made per game and assist-turnover ratio.

Harper is the pacesetter for Auburn's frequently up-tempo style.

He also is pretty good at predictions, including one he made the morning of the Kentucky game.

"He said, 'Dad, we're going to win this game and I'm going to have a big game,'" the proud father recalled. "And he delivered."

NCAA TOURNAMENT

Money, opportunity fueled 'one-and done'

Early departures for pros once were revolutionary

By EDDIE PELLIS
AND LARRY FENN
Associated Press

Spencer Haywood set the stage. Michael Jordan made it bigger and Kevin Durant super-sized it when he helped usher in the one-and-done era. Decades after those players made their groundbreaking departures from college, March Madness and the NBA's mega-millions have taken all the novelty out of leaving early for the pros.

In the present era of one-and-done — a system that begat college programs that cater to kids in search of a one-year stopover instead of a diploma — the decision about whether to take off early for the NBA isn't so much one of 'if' but 'when' for hundreds of players every year.

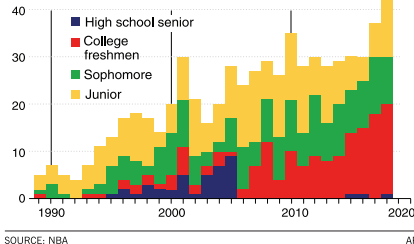
An Associated Press analysis of NCAA Tournament rosters over the last three decades shows the ever-expanding impact that early entry, and especially the one-and-done player, has had on both the college game and the NBA Draft.

In 2005, the year before the one-and-done rule went into effect, there were nine high schoolers and one freshman drafted. Last season, there were no high schoolers, and 13 of the first 18 picks were one-and-done.

In the first year the AP studied, 1989, there were 13 early entries, five of whom played in the NCAA Tournament. Only one player drafted by the NBA that year was a freshman, Shawn Kemp. (The future six-time NBA All-Star never played college basketball after eligibility issues at Ken-

Players drafted early in the NBA

Starting in the late 1990s, high school players began to make up a significant portion of the players entering the NBA Draft early, peaking with nine players in 2005. The NBA changed the eligibility rules for the next draft, creating the "one-and-done" era. Since then, college freshmen have made up a growing proportion of the draft. Nineteen were selected in 2018.



SOURCE: NBA

AP

tucky and a transfer to a junior college.)

The rules could be changing again soon.

The NBA is considering doing away with the rule prohibiting players under 19 from being drafted, and the league is trying to come up with a new system. But it doesn't want to return to the days of the 1990s and early 2000s, when unprepared high schoolers were drafted early, many of them never developing into stars or even role players. Whatever the change, it figures to have a considerable impact on the college game, though nobody is sure exactly what the impact will be.

"I think kids should go right to

the NBA," says Kentucky coach John Calipari, who has become the leading advocate of one-and-done, and the security it has brought to many college players and their families. "But there's probably [only] five or six or seven that are ready to do that, and even half of those will probably spend time in the (developmental) G League."

It wasn't always like this.

Haywood's decision to leave the University of Detroit in 1969 for the then-ascending ABA was considered revolutionary at the time. A year later, when he signed with the NBA's Seattle SuperSonics, he won a Supreme Court case against the league, which had sued for violating the rule that



HAROLD FILAN/AP

In this Oct. 7, 1972, file photo, Spencer Haywood, right, of the Seattle SuperSonics goes around Sidney Wicks of the Portland Trail Blazers as he drives toward the basket during their NBA exhibition game at the Forum in Los Angeles. Haywood left college early for the ABA in 1969, then won a lawsuit that allowed him to play in the NBA with the Sonics. That sparked an ever-growing trend of players playing pro ball before graduating college.

players couldn't enter the league until they were four years removed from high school.

Haywood's victory set precedent, even if it didn't exactly open the floodgates. Through the 1970s, a handful, sometimes up to a dozen, underclassmen entered each year into a league where a decent salary was only starting to reach into six figures. Some early entries from that era: Moses Malone, Bernard King, Reggie Theus.

Magic Johnson came out after his sophomore year, in 1979, and along with Larry Bird helped take the NBA to new heights.

By the time Jordan left North Carolina after the 1984 season — one of nine underclassmen, along with Charles Barkley and Hakeem Olajuwon, to declare that year — the NBA was introducing a salary cap, at \$3.6 million a team, and the NCAA was expanding the field in its tournament to 64 teams.

Neither the pros nor what essentially became its unofficial minor league, college basketball, have looked back since.

Today, the cap stands at nearly \$102 million and the number of players who came out early ballooned to 236 last year. Only 42 got drafted.

In between Haywood and 2018, early entry became more the norm than the exception.

In the early 1990s, the Fab Five and Michigan helped introduce baggy shorts and hip-hop into basketball. But in a wide-ranging recruiting scandal that resulted in most of their victories being wiped off the official books, Chris Webber, booster Ed Martin and the rest afforded college hoops a preview of the havoc that the growing influence of cash — with boosters, shoe companies and club coaches all playing a role in its distribution — could wreak on the sport.

With no restrictions and plenty of opportunities, high schoolers started taking the dip more regularly. But for every Kevin Garnett — the player who triggered the teens-to-NBA onslaught in 1995 — or LeBron James, there were even more like Kwame Brown, a top pick who turned into a bust or, even worse, Taj McDavid, who thought he could go from high school to the NBA, but never got a sniff.

That brought about the one-and-done rule.

Established in 2006, the year before Durant entered the draft and helped push the issue to the front-and-center of the basketball conversation, the rule forced players to wait a year after high school to enter the NBA. Most chose to use that year playing college ball, and Calipari wasn't the only coach willing to cater to them.

These days, "one-and-done" is often used as catch-all for everything wrong with college basketball.

With the FBI getting involved in sorting out the connection between money, shoes and hoops — a job many think the NCAA should be doing instead of law enforcement — the NBA is rethinking one-and-done, trying to come up with a system that will better serve the game.

"It's going to happen," says Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski, one of those who has taken greatest advantage of the system.

A new framework could be in play by the 2022 draft. But what that system will bring is the multimillion-dollar question hovering over the game for the next three years.

"Tell me the environment that we're going to be in," Krzyzewski said. "We don't know that environment. I don't know how a youngster will be taken care of."



AP file photo

In this November 1991 photo, Michigan's Fab Five, from left, Jimmy King, Juwan Howard, Chris Webber, Jalen Rose and Ray Jackson pose in Ann Arbor, Mich. In a wide-ranging recruiting scandal that resulted in most of their records being wiped off the books, Webber, booster Ed Martin and the rest afforded college hoops a preview of the havoc that the growing influence of cash, with boosters, shoe companies and club coaches all playing a role in its distribution.

NCAA TOURNAMENT



ALEX BRANDON, ABOVE, AND CHARLIE RIEDEL, BELOW/AP
 Above: Michigan State senior forward Kenny Goins dunks against Duke in the regional final on Sunday. The Spartans aren't considered among the teams that have NBA-ready upperclassmen. Below: Auburn's Chuma Okeke was considered an NBA first-round pick before suffering a torn ACL in the regional semifinals against North Carolina.

Best: Teams that want to advance deep in the tournament must have NBA talent

FROM BACK PAGE

The AP analyzed rosters of every team to make the tournament at least 10 times over the last 30 years and saw a trend that goes beyond the anecdotes and occasional tales of magical runs that have underscored the storytelling driving this debate for decades. The conclusion, as succinctly summed up by Gonzaga coach Mark Few: "It's not a big secret. If you want to win and advance in this tournament, you have to have NBA talent."

"You can get the NBA talent through recruiting one-and-dones, or you can do it through development," Few said. "But whether it's one-and-dones or two-and-dones, you have to have it."

A wealth of NBA talent has been the mainstay on perennial contenders such as Kentucky, Duke and Kansas, which are among the programs that stand out in the AP analysis. Of the 79 teams the AP charted (including seven that made fewer than 10 appearances but went to the Final Four at least once), those blue bloods, along with North Carolina and Connecticut, were the only programs that averaged nearly three wins—a trip to the Elite Eight—per tournament appearance since 1989. All of those teams were also in the top 10 of programs that had the most early entries in the NBA Draft over the same span.

And though this year's Final Four is being touted as one in which experience and teamwork won out over NBA-ready talent, three of the teams in Minneapolis this week do, in fact, have underclassmen on the roster who could be first-round draft picks. Sophomores Jarrett Culver of Texas Tech and De'Andre Hunter of Virginia are potential lottery picks in this year's NBA Draft, and even Auburn made it this far with the help of now-injured sophomore Chuma Okeke, who is widely considered to have first-round ability.



ALEX BRANDON/AP

Duke forward Zion Williamson could be the No. 1 pick in this year's NBA Draft.

The reality only serves to heighten the debate about what is essentially the professionalization of college basketball. It's an issue that has become increasingly fraught in the wake of FBI investigations that further reinforced the influence that big money, shoe companies and the prospects of pro pardon have on the college game.

"There are some things that are wrong with it, things that take place that are inappropriate," said Auburn coach Bruce Pearl, who himself has been previously banned by the NCAA and, more recently, has seen a handful of his Tigers assistants caught up in the current probe. "That's the business of college basketball. The reason why the NCAA is involved in this is because it's their job to monitor."

There are, of course, exceptions to the talent-equals-titles rule. This year's Michigan State squad doesn't appear to have any NBA-ready underclassmen on its roster, even though the Spartans are a program that traditionally draws that sort of talent.

The Loyola-Chicago, George Masons and VCU's of the world are the teams that prove, semi-regularly, that anything is possible, and are a big part of the reason the tournament captivates America every spring. But they are the outliers. The reality is that gritty, unselfish teamwork is nice, but raw talent is better.

"It's like when I go to (fried chicken restaurant) Grandy's, do I want double mashed potatoes or mashed potatoes and corn?" said Texas Tech coach Chris Beard. "I want both. So we would love to have All-Americans and turn 'em into grinders."

As Gonzaga's role in the sport has morphed from plucky underdog to perennial power over the past two decades, Few says he's changed his strategy from one that emphasized roster building to one that focuses on roster management.

"The most important part of the year now is April and May," he said, in a nod to the period when NBA-caliber players such as Rui Hachimura and Brandon Clarke make their decisions about whether to stay or go. "You project what they're going to do, then you plan accordingly."

No program runs on the hamster wheel of quick turnover more than Kentucky. Not surprisingly, the Wildcats, thanks largely to the impact of the one-and-done factory

John Calipari has been running for the past decade, have been to the tournament 29 times since 1989 and sent 45 players to the NBA before they graduated. They average just shy of three victories per trip, and just shy of 1.7 early departures per year they've appeared. In the AP analysis, they are alone in their own quadrant of the data grid.

Not included in the study are teams that didn't make the tournament despite having one-and-done and other early entry talent. Ben Simmons spent one year at LSU, and Markelle Fultz spent a season at Washington, but neither played in March Madness.

On the other end of the spectrum, having NBA talent is no guarantee of success. Both Texas and Southern California have put more than a dozen early entry players into the league over the span of the study, but their victories-per-tournament average hovers around 1.

And yet, the way the top programs have ensured consistent success, the analysis proves, is by repeatedly securing that kind of talent.

But there's a chance everyone might have to recalibrate.

With the NBA and its players' union considering changes that could end one-and-done, and possibly allow players to go to the NBA straight from high school—the way the system worked for decades before 2006—Kentucky's path to success could be in peril.

"I don't know how it will play out, but we'll try to be first in whatever we're doing," Calipari said.

It's not only the Wildcats who might need to adjust.

Even programs like Michigan and UConn, which tend to keep players around longer, haven't shied away from the realities of college basketball in the 2000s: one-and-dones drastically improve your outlook, like it or not.

"We've never said we're not going to take a one-and-done guy," said Wolverines coach John Beilein, who leads a program that, in many ways, wrote the first chapter of the book on modern basketball when the Fab Five came through in the early 1990s. "But at the same time, we're going to be very open with a young man, that if you're coming, this is a destination. This is not a stopover."

Over the three decades the AP studied, Michigan averaged 2.375 wins in each of its 16 NCAA Tournament appearances, while ending 16 players early to the NBA.

Like Beilein—and unlike Calipari—Duke's Mike Krzyzewski is nowhere near as outspoken about embracing his school's role as a place where the most talented players are welcome to camp out for a year before heading to the NBA.

In 2015, the Blue Devils won the title with two freshmen who left to become lottery picks. (Jahlil Okafor and Justise Winslow.) This year, the Blue Devils have three potential one-and-dones in Zion Williamson, Cam Reddish and R.J. Barrett.

They came up one point short of the Final Four—agonizing, for sure, but hardly an indictment of a formula that has worked for decades.

It's a formula more schools would like to get their hands on.

"We don't shy away from that," said Beard, who led Texas Tech to its first Final Four this year. "Our goal is to have a team at Texas Tech one day where every guy on the team is an NBA player. No doubt about it, to play on this stage, you have to have pros, and you've got to evaluate and recruit and develop them."



SPORTS



Making his case
Lightning's Kucherov running away
with MVP honor » **NHL, Page 56**

NCAA TOURNAMENT

TALENT

Best systems rarely
beat elite players

By EDDIE PELLIS AND LARRY FENN
Associated Press

Though this year's Final Four is being touted as one in which experience and teamwork won out over NBA-ready talent, three of the teams have underclassmen who could be first-round draft picks.

In the 30 seasons since the NCAA Tournament started morphing into "March Madness," 120 teams have traveled the road to the Final Four. That's 120 unique formulas that have worked to make it onto college basketball's biggest stage.

For all the debate about what counts more toward building a championship program — great teams with veteran leaders and role players versus outstanding individual talent, even if that talent only makes a short pit stop in college before going to the pros — an Associated Press analysis of rosters found that one factor outweighs all else:

The most surefire way to consistently advance deep into the tournament is by amassing players with enough NBA potential to leave college early.

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Texas Tech guard Jarrett Culver, right, and Virginia guard De'Andre Hunter, left, are expected to be lottery picks in this year's NBA Draft.

CHARLIE RIEDEL, RIGHT, AND MICHAEL CONROY, LEFT/AP



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